EXPLORING PERCEIVED NORMS OF PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

by

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ABSTRACT

Exposure to pornography—both intentional and unintentional—is becoming a reality for many adolescents. According to Ropelato, the average age of first internet exposure to pornography is 11. Moreover, Manning describes regular consumption of pornography as leading to a decreased sensitivity towards women, distorted and unhealthy views about sexuality, views that suggest promiscuity or that sexual relations with multiple partners is deemed as a natural behavior, increased risk of developing a negative body image, and increased risk of developing sexually compulsive and/or addictive behavior.

The potential impacts of pornography on adolescents, intermixed with the rising number of those exposed to such material, is alarming; further scholarship needs to address how this issue is being conceptualized and combated. A few scholars posit the claim that open, frequent, and direct communication about pornography between parents and children is needed**.** To provide groundwork for future investigations concerning parent-child pornography communication, I used Rimal and Real's (2005) theory of normative social behavior (TNSB) as a guiding theoretical lens to conduct 33 semistructured, in-depth interviews with parents of at least one middle-school-aged child. Three varying "cases" or groups of parents were included to promote variance in background and perception.

Interviews focused on parental perceptions of societal beliefs about pornography,

pornography's impact on adolescents, and the courses of actions (or lack thereof) that most parents undertake when adolescents are exposed to pornography. Articulated perceptions suggest that most parents view adolescent exposure to pornography as negative although exposure to pornography is becoming more normative for adolescents. Participants also acknowledged the rising need to discuss pornography with children, but identified obstacles such as fear, discomfort, and a lack in sexual and technological communication openness/knowledge that may prevent parents from doing so. Recommendations related to general family "openness," strengthening parental pornography education, and the importance of overall positive parent-child relationships are offered as suggestions to increase parent-child pornography communication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If someone were to ask me 5 years ago if I saw myself writing a dissertation and completing a doctoral program, I would have laughed and told them, “You’re nuts! There’s no way I could complete a doctorate degree on my own.” The reality is that this statement is still as true today as it was 5 years ago. The difference is that I have not completed this journey on my own, and there are many that deserve my gratitude.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I had an experience several months ago that continues to shape my views regarding adolescents and technology. The time was around 8:30am, about 45 minutes prior to school beginning. A few middle school students were in my Language Arts room catching up on some of their online coursework. Out of the corner of one eye, I noticed that one student had slightly turned his screen away from me and appeared to be heavily "locked-in" to his computer. Acknowledging the common nonverbal signs of off-task behavior, I stood up from my seat and started to move towards him. His eyes were hooked, and I realized that if I meandered carefully, I could catch a glance of his screen before he had time to switch whatever content he was currently engaged with. I placed my hand on the top of his Chromebook and turned it so I had full view. I was greatly taken-aback by what I observed. In the central portion of his screen was a fictitious looking, cartoon-like character jumping video game. The graphics were brightly colored, with the main character leaping over goofy items such as abnormally-sized chunks of cheese and apples. On the side of this video game, however, was an image that I can still see clearly in my mind. Juxtaposed to this children's video game was a picture of the top-half portion of a naked female. Although the student did not appear to be paying any attention to what was on the side of his screen, I was alarmed by what I was

witnessing: pornography directly mixed with children's entertainment.

Exposure to internet pornography, both intentional and unintentional, is becoming a reality for many adolescents (Wolack, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007). According to Ropelato (2007), the average age of "first internet exposure to pornography" is 11. Ropelato further estimates that approximately 90% of children ages 8-16 have been exposed to pornography online (mostly while doing homework), and 70% of 15-17 year-olds have experienced multiple exposures to hardcore pornography. Cooper, Delmonico, and Berg (2000) approach this phenomenon from a slightly different lens, affirming that the term "sex" is the highest searched topic on the internet, with pornographic search-engine requests accumulating to 25% (68 million per day) of all total requests. Cooper et al. contend that recent technological advances have led to a "Triple-A Engine" effect for pornographic consumption--where 24-hour availability, increased degrees of affordability, and anonymity via personalized computers allow internet content to become the ideal milieu for consumption.

With the number of children exposed to pornographic material via the internet on the rise, some may question the potential impact pornography has on young people. Addressing this query, Manning (2008) asserts that regular consumption of pornography can lead to a decreased sensitivity towards women, distorted and unhealthy views about sexuality, views that suggest promiscuity or that sexual relations with multiple partners is deemed as a natural behavior, increased risk of developing a negative body image, and increased risk of developing sexually compulsive and/or addictive behavior. Flood (2009) echoes Manning's supposition, arguing the following:

> Pornography exposure can lead to emotional disturbance, sexual knowledge and liberalized attitudes, shifts in sexual behaviour, and sexist and objectifying

> understandings. Particularly for boys and young men, the use of pornography may exacerbate violence-supportive social norms and encourage their participation in sexual abuse. (p. 384)

The potential impacts of pornography, intermixed with the rising number of those exposed to such material, is alarming. Scholarship needs to address how this issue is being conceptualized and combated--specifically as more and more adolescents are being prompted to engage with technology.

Background to the Problem and Coinciding Research Questions

The emersion of adolescents to a more technology-centered way of existence has become an area of conversation within educational, political, and activists' discourse. For instance, Jan van Dijk (2005) explores technological *divides*--which are inequities among groups in relation to use, access, and knowledge of information and communication technologies (ICTs)--among generations. Hargittai's (2003) research acknowledges the cavities within digital divides, suggesting that digital divides employ gaps "between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not" and "between those who use digital technologies and those who do not understand in binary terms distinguishing the 'haves' and the 'have nots'" (p. 2). Hargiattai poses that these digital gaps create *digital inequalities*, or "a spectrum of inequality across segments of the population depending on differences among several dimensions of technology access and use" (p. 2). Such digital divides, gaps, and inequalities present interesting implications regarding who engages in the technological realm, as well as participatory and nonparticipatory ramifications.

Pertinent to today's adolescent populations, van Dijk (2005) outlines a divide

termed as *participation*, or an individual's ability and means "to participate" in the technological realm. Van Dijk contends that the ability to participate becomes increasingly significant as inclusion and exclusion of ICTs can implicate an individual's opportunity to increase in general knowledge, employment, social position, and economic success. Unearthing these implications, van Dijk offers seven constructs that explore motivations behind providing technological access to all. These motivations include economical, educational, social, spatial, cultural, political, and institutional participation.

Economical, educational, social, and cultural factors are most relevant to adolescents. Beginning with *economic participation,* van Dijk (2005) argues that a lack in digital skills can create an "absolute exclusion" from acquiring a growing number of jobs within the US (p. 167-168). To illustrate, the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2008) estimates that 62% of employed Americans use the internet as a fundamental component of their employment. Furthermore, the U.S. Department Commerce Internet Policy Task Force (2010) reports that between the years of 1998 and 2008, domestic IT jobs increased by 26% (comparatively 4 times greater than U.S. employment as a whole) and that by 2018, this increase is expected to climb another 22% (commerce.gov). Growth in IT employment markets prompts necessary transitions to employee skill-sets. For example, in their report on the top 10 skills for the future, the Institute for the Future (a nonprofit research organization that assists in tracking trends to predict future scenarios) identifies attributes such as new media literacy, virtual collaboration, the ability to filter and prioritize digital information, cross-cultural competency, and social intelligence within a technology-driven world as key abilities for future employee success (iftf.org).

Another consideration involves the growing use of the internet to locate and employ individuals. In 2009, around three million Americans were employed through the use of advertising-supported internet services, and 1.2 million of this population obtained jobs that did not exist two decades ago. These statistics also exemplify the increased use of online job search engines and internet application submissions. Accordingly, government-affiliated websites argue that high-speed internet access and online skills have become an essential part of seeking, applying for, and obtaining employment within what is now termed as the "Internet Economy" of today (commerce.gov).

Beyond utilizing the internet to search for employment opportunities and submitting online applications, van Dijk emphasizes a continuing "polarization" in technological skill between simpler computer procedures (e.g., word processing and searching the internet) to more complex technological tasks such as programming, computer design, and management systems (p. 168). Furthermore, van Dijk highlights other avenues of employment that require adolescents to develop technological skills. For instance, in previous decades, small business owners might have been able to construct and orchestrate their own company in one, physically localized setting. Yet, van Dijk argues that many of today's small business owners must now be equipped with technological internet skills that allow them to complete a multitude of tasks for successful business operation. Identifying actions such as the ordering of products online, communicating with and billing customers via email, broadening the company's profile through the use of online advertisement, and submitting tax documents, van Dijk contends that general procedures now require business stakeholders and employees to hold a technological skillset.

In addition to economic motivations, van Dijk outlines *educational implications* as students are frequently asked to search for specific information online, electronically take and submit tests, as well as draft and deliver papers to various internet sites. Viewed as a highly "connected" group through their exposure to the World Wide Web, educational scholars argue that adolescents must now "be prepared to spend their adult lives in a multitasking, multifaceted, technology-driven, diverse workforce environment, and they must be equipped to do so" (Hall, 2006, pp. 41-42).

Prensky (2001) contends that through the increased amount of video gaming, email, internet, cell phone, and instant message usage, "today's students think *and process information fundamentally differently* from their predecessors" and, as a result of the technology with which they have interacted for much of their lives, "it is very likely that our *students' brains have physically changed*" (p. 1, author's emphasis). Coining the phrase *digital natives* in relation to those that "grow up" with technology present, Prensky suggests that, overall, cognitive patterns are in a transitional stage where the graphic is preferred before text, and multitasking skills are often used to receive and process information faster than previous generations. As a result of these educational motivations and transitions in learning styles, many teachers now strive to incorporate technology into their teaching strategies and curricula in recognition of the extent to which modern society relies on technology to progress.

Perhaps one of the more popular and influential participatory elements for adolescents is what van Dijk describes as *social motivations*. Van Dijk argues that, "the use of computers and the Internet can increase social capital in terms of social contact, civic engagement, and sense of community" (p. 171). In relation to younger populations,

some scholars argue that online interactions are fundamental to adolescent identity development. For example, group membership (or lack thereof) is often viewed as a central component of adolescent identity development; such membership allows for external experiences to either reinforce or challenge the conceptualization one has of oneself. As Tajfel (1978) explains, group membership constructs a *social environment* where one can explore both cognitive and behavioral practices. Therefore, in relation to online experiences and social motivations, participants frequently associate portions of their identity in connection to the interactions they have in virtual environments (Talamo & Ligorio, 2001). Prompting this formation is the use of a combination of both visual and text-based communication that is reliant upon technological use. Such individualized identifiers often involve the use of Avatars, or an image or photo that serves as representative of the individual online. Thus, Talamo and Ligorio (2001) contend that online profiles are not a static illustration of participants, but rather a moving and evolving negotiation of discourses that are dependent upon the context and constructed roles played by each member. Talamo and Ligorio argue that online personal profiles and Avatars, consequently, are not as much a representation of identity, but rather a positioning of one's identity in a social realm.

Other scholars note the role of online interactions for building relationships and expanding social encounters. For instance, a 2006 Pew survey examined the motivations as to why adolescents use social networking sites (SNS): the survey suggested that females frequently use SNS to reinforce pre-existing friendships whereas males use SNS to create new friendships and to flirt. Moreover, another investigation found that adolescents often use online interactions to communicate about everyday issues, such as

friends and gossip (Gross, 2004). Additionally, a 2001 survey conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project revealed that 48% of teens online believe that the internet improves relationships with friends and 61% suggested that time spent online did not distract from friendships. These beliefs were reinforced on greater levels according to the overall time spent online. Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008) echo the finding that online tools can act as a strengthener in building adolescent relationships. Subrahmanyam and Greenfield assert that, frequently, online communication is used to reinforce existing relationships. Whereas virtual modes are not meant to replace offline interactions, van Dijk contends that the usage of social technological participation often complements and even strengthens offline relationships. Consequently, social motivations become an especially prevalent instigator as teens can experience emotions of either inclusion or exclusion derived from opportunities to interact with friends socially in the online realm.

In addition to economic, educational, and social participation, another motivator for involvement includes van Dijk's description of a *participatory culture*, or the cultural pressures placed on individuals to engage in technology. Henry Jenkins (2006) examines participatory culture in greater detail, suggesting that participatory culture is "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices" (p. 3). Jenkins asserts that contribution matters within participatory culture, where participants "feel some degree of social connection with one another (at least they care what other people think about what they have created)" (p. 3). Jenkins identifies forms or qualities of

participatory culture, including (1) *affiliation*, or membership to online communities that center around media, (2) *expression*, or the production of new creative forms of media, (3) *collaborative problem-solving*, or the ability to work in both formal and informal teams to complete digital tasks and develop new knowledge, and (4) *circulations*, or participation within the construction, distribution, and flow of media.

Williams and Zenger (2012) examine the implications of participatory culture through their compilation of popular new media cultures. Interestingly, however, many of their chapters suggest that popular participatory cultures extend far beyond general day-to-day social implications. For instance, Zenger examines university students' use of Facebook to circulate a strike against increases in tuition rates and financial aid policies at the University of Beirut. Similarly, Schreyer's (2012) exploration positions online gaming as an educational tool to build literacy and cross-culture relations. Scholars, such as Williams and Zenger (2012) and Schreyer (2012), construct the notion that boundaries of technological participation exceed far beyond traditional communication practices--particularly as the online realm provides adolescents with a plethora of opportunities to share, create, learn, interact, and engage with individuals all over the world.

The push to familiarize young people with technology is on the rise. Factors such as economical, educational, social, and cultural implications point to motivators that many argue hold direct application to the adolescent's ability to achieve success. These arguments cannot be ignored. Yet, with this augment for younger generations to utilize and incorporate technology into multiple facets of their lives, the last 25 years have also generated a plethora of technology-driven problems for adolescents. Instances of cyberbullying (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000; Li, 2006; Mishna, Cook, Gadalla,

Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010; Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2007), depression from social media use (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011), and, in particular to this examination, a massive increase of adolescent exposure to online pornographic content are primary examples of complications that continue to surge.

One group that is conceivably caught in the whirlwinds of technological evolutions are the parents of rising younger generations. Research suggests that many parents struggle to stay up-to-date with modern devices and software and, in some cases, do not have technological access themselves (Cho & Cheon, 2005; Liau & Khoo, 2008). In retrospect, I pose the following question: "Are we pushing too hard and too fast, and consequently, perhaps leaving our world defenselessly unprepared for the evolving consequences of promoting adolescents' access to the technological world?" Interesting implications emerge in the idea that potentially many younger generations are being handed (and in some instances, pushed to engage with) technology without significant parental education in how to protect themselves from online threats.

A few scholars posit the claim that open, frequent, and direct communication about pornography between parents and children is central to combating adolescent exposure to internet pornography (Byrne & Lee, 2011; Greenfield, 2004; Heidari, Kazemi, & Nikmanesh, 2012; Rasmussen, Ortiz, & White, 2015; Wolack, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007). However, minimal research currently investigates this preventative claim in detail. My aim for this investigation was to conduct semistructured, in-depth interviews in an effort to understand parental attitudes concerning pornography, pornography's impact on society, and the courses of actions (or lack thereof) that parents undertake and believe others take when children are exposed to pornography. Shedding

light on some of these queries, Rimal and Real's (2005) theory of normative social behavior (TNSB) served as a useful lens in studying populace norms. The TNSB is frequently used in communication research to examine how individual behavior is influenced by conceptualizations of societal norms. Consequently, the use of the TNSB was a constructive lens to explore societal perceptions of parental beliefs about adolescent exposure to pornography and the roles parents play in communicating with children about pornography. The following research questions that incorporate the TNSB as a lens were used as a guide to this investigation.

RQ_1: How do parents describe the descriptive norms surrounding parent-child pornography communication?

a. What are parental descriptive norms regarding the definition of pornography?
b. What are parental descriptive norms regarding pornography's impacts on adolescents?
c. What are the parental descriptive norms regarding parental roles in communicating with children about pornography?

RQ_2: How do parents describe the injunctive norms surrounding parent-child pornography communication?

Defining Pornography and Adolescence

In discussing the role that parents play to address pornography with children, it becomes essential to first identify how the term pornography is used within scholarship. A review of the literature suggests that the use of the term "pornography" is ambiguous,

particularly as pornography scholarship frequently associates pornography with other phrases such as *sexually explicit media* (SEM) and *sexually explicit internet material* (SEIM). Owens, Behun, Manning, and Reid (2012) posit that "there are almost as many definitions for sexually explicit material as there are individuals who have studied it" (p. 103). In conjunction to varying definitions and perspectives, examples within the literature illuminate a spectrum that dichotomizes generalization to specificity. For instance, in a national survey that examines general exposure to pornography among adolescents, Ybarra and Mitchell (2005) point to descriptive contexts surrounding the term pornography to define it, such as "the often unfettered access to web sites" (p. 474). Congruently, other scholars focus on action, such as Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak (2003)'s notion of *unwanted pornography exposure*, which is instilled in the act of clicking, receiving, or accessing a website with "pictures of naked people or people having sex" (p. 337). Other scholars categorize pornography in conjunction to the medium utilized to enact it. For instance, Tsitsika et al. (2009) articulate pornography as "illicit Internet sites portraying sexual behaviors and practices" (p. 546). Similarly, Braun-Courville and Rojas (2009) point to the visual components of media, contending that pornography involves websites that "describe people having sex, show clear pictures of nudity or people having sex, or show a movie or audio that describes people having sex" (p. 157).

Other researchers report a much more specific denotation of pornography. For example, Owens et al. cite several descriptions of pornography, including Peter and Valkenburg's (2009)'s description of "sexual activities in unconcealed ways" (p. 408) and the *1986 Attorney General's Commission on Pornography* that posits pornography as

"predominately sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal" (McManus, 1986, p. 8). In regards to this investigation, I will utilize the 1986 Attorney General Commission's definition of pornography or "predominately sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal" (McManus, 1986, p. 8) because it includes a wide range of media and does not solely rely on the internet in terms of access. My focus for this examination revolves more around how pornography is conceptualized by parents on a societal level and the strategies that parents incorporate (or do not incorporate) in protecting children from repeated exposure to such messages. Consequently, employing a definition that emphasizes purpose rather than the characteristics of pornographic messages may be helpful in searching for broadened understandings of perceptions of parent-child communication about pornography.

Another crucial term to acknowledge is the age range that encompasses the use of the word *adolescence*. Owens et al. (2012) note that in the adolescent and pornography literature, participants range from as young as age 10 (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005) and as old as 22 (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). Yet, on a general basis, Owens et al. further account that much of the research correlates the term "adolescence" to youth between the years of 13-18 (Hunter, Figueredo, & Malamuth, 2010; Mesch, 2009; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006). The present investigation follows suit to the age range of 13-18 with the use of the term *adolescence*. Consequently, scholarly and general populace definitions of the terms pornography and adolescence become useful in examining relationship and influence, particularly as exposure to pornography among younger individuals becomes pervasive and harmful.

Overview of the Dissertation

The structure of this dissertation follows similar formatting to a qualitative research investigation. In Chapter 2, I present a conceptual framework regarding pornography, pornography's emergence to the internet, as well as the increased accessibility the internet provides for adolescents to encounter pornography. This discussion blends into conversation regarding the impacts of pornography on adolescents to provide further justification as to why this area needs to be explored. The next section poses the claim of parent-child pornography communication as a strong interventional tool. I review three articles that use this claim and suggest that further investigation/interrogation of this claim is necessary. I then broaden my lens to include literature addressing parents communicating about both sexual and technological topics and the characteristics/limitations of this communication. Integrated into this discussion will be relevant family communication studies and parenting styles research. I also provide a section that reviews the challenges that many parents face in both sexual and technological communication.

Challenges associated with parent-child pornography communication will tie into the larger rationale as to why research exploring this area is needed. Since research in this area is limited, I suggest that a broader perspective is required in establishing a baseline for future investigations. In achieving a broader outlook, I propose the use of the TNSB. The next section reviews the TNSB and its central claims and components.

After outlining relevant literature and providing a theoretical background, I present a methodology section. In Chapter 3, I addressed my selected methods and procedures in regards to the participants, research site, data collection, as well as data

analysis and synthesis.

My fourth chapter works to present the results and report the findings of the investigation by providing verbatim examples. Moustakas (1994) suggests that this section typically includes the use of direct quotes/statements that present insight to the presentation of textural and structural descriptions. I report these results by case study in efforts to prompt comparability and analysis.

The final chapter summarizes findings present in all cases, as well as provides implications to these findings and recommendations for future explorations. Limitations of the study are addressed in prompting further exploration.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of research describing the evolution of pornography and its growing impact on adolescents provides a basis for the present investigation. Chapter 2 first outlines the history of pornography's emergence to the internet, which led to adolescents' increased abilities to access pornography. Research addressing the impacts of pornography on adolescents is then reviewed. This discussion lends itself to examination of parent-child pornography communication. I then broaden the discussion to include relevant literature regarding parent-child sexual communication. Adding to this conversation is research related to the potential challenges parents may face when engaging in parent-child pornography communication. The final section of Chapter 2 integrates the theoretical lens of the theory of normative social behavior that will be used to bridge certain gaps identified in the reviewed literature.

The Evolution of Internet Pornography and Its Expansive Reach to Younger Generations

The presence of pornographic content is nothing novel or unfamiliar to many cultures and societies. By pornographic and/or pornography, I mean sexually explicit material "intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal" (McManus, 1986, p. 8).

My use of this definition follows other scholarly examinations (e.g., Carroll et al., 2008; Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012) and includes a wide array of material ranging from images to moving depictions. Eberstadt and Layden (2010) suggest that pornographic content originates from thousands of years ago, stating that "Vase imagery from ancient Greece and the painted pornographic scenes from Pompeii are two frequently cited examples, though there are of course many more" (p. 8). Yet, coinciding with the advancement of modern technologies, the way pornography is presented and shared continues to evolve: from magazines and adult books, to the VCR, now to on-demand cable services, internet content, and popular video games, technology-centered devices play a key role in how such content is shared and expressed.

In tracking pornography's emergence to the internet, a review of technological influencers to the pornography industry becomes useful. Jonathan Coopersmith (1998) posits that "pornography is defined by technology, because its creation, transmission and diffusion are so intimately related to the development of communication technologies" (p. 96). Coopersmith's historical overview accounts for the role of technology in increasing pornography distribution--commencing with the printing press' extension of pornography circulation through mass production of books, cards, prints, and pamphlets. Coopersmith outlines specific advancements in pornography distribution as they relate to implementation of technologies, such as the printing press's role in alleviating potential barriers of pornography consumption by bringing "the product to the consumer." Other influential technologies include the invention of still photography in the mid-19th century, shifts in the film industry post-World War Two from 16mm cameras to 8mm cameras and projectors, the transition from "covert to overt access" of pornography

through the publication of *Playboy* in 1953, to private viewership of pornography in more private environments through cable TV and the VCR in the 1970's and 1980's (p. 96).

Coopersmith's analysis traces patterns of technological progression mirrored by pornography industry development. Such an analysis foreshadows more recent data-driven research that posits increased levels of internet pornography consumption among adolescents and emergent adults today (Buzzell, 2005; Carroll et al., 2008; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Wei, Lo, & Wu, 2010; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007). Surprisingly, however, Buzzell (2005) argues that a limited number of scientific investigations "have explored the significance of technology to making pornography more accessible, and thus the use of pornography" (p. 29). Buzzell notes that this factor is "disturbing given the political and legal significance often attributed to the role technology plays in the distribution of pornography" (p. 29). Nonetheless, Buzzell identifies the VCR as one of the first technological advancements examined regarding pornography distribution increase. Referencing the 1986 Attorney General's Commission on Pornography Report (often referred to as the Meese Commission, a commission charged by United States President Ronald Reagan to evaluate empirical data that described relationships between pornographic exposure and antisocial behavior), Hawkins and Zimring's (1988) review of the commission's report highlights the VCR's role in increasing private viewership of pornography in home settings. Congruent with Bruzzell's summary, Hawkins and Zimring also note the minimal amount of data available in 1988 that address technology's influence in the distribution of pornography. Buzzell's history suggests that it was not until the early 2000s--close to a decade after the implementation of the internet on a mass level--that scholarship began to more

thoroughly examine technology and pornography distribution.

As Buzzell records, the most notable increase in pornography dissemination parallels the creation and mass implementation of the internet. More recent scholarship posits that nearly 78% of Americans hold internet access (Miniwatts Marketing Group) and, subsequently, this technological surge has increased pornography use (Buzzell, 2005). Casanova, Solursh, Solursh, Roy, and Thigpen (2009), in their review of the history of child pornography and the internet, describe the implications that the internet holds regarding access to pornographic material.

> The Internet gives us access to global information at ever-increasing speed and decreasing expense. A computer user may at one moment send e-mail or gain access to the National Library of Medicine, then follow those transactions a second later by electronically cruising down 42nd Street in New York City. Because the Net transcends traditional boundaries, computer users with modems and Internet access have become citizens of the world. They may now download sexually explicit information and graphics from Sweden into their living room in New Jersey. The catalyst for this electronic revolution has been the information superhighway. (p. 247)

Solursh et al. stress that whereas the internet provides a myriad of opportunities for patrons (such as obtaining information, increased interpersonal and mass modes of communication, entertainment, and general traits of ease), the internet's "information superhighway" carries certain challenges, or what Solursh et al. term as "potholes." For instance, regarding pornography, these scholars suggest that the internet's capabilities to adapt, modify, and advance higher qualities of picture and audio create the opportunity for increased user involvement and interaction with sharing pornographic content. Thus, "for many users, the addition of computer intelligence to the search for pornographic material makes it sophisticated, glamorous, and socially acceptable" (p, 247).

Cooper, Boies, Maheu, and Greenfield (1999) further expand this notion of

"glamorification" of cyber pornography, suggesting that the internet's impact has been so dramatic that it may serve as the catalyst for the next "sexual revolution." Descriptive characteristics such as "accessible," "anonymous," and "affordable" are frequently cited to categorize what Cooper et al. (2000) identify as the *Triple A Engine*--or an effective combination of characteristics that fuels an increased trend of pornography use. When combined with sexual activity, the internet's platform "'turbocharges' online sexual activity in such a way as to facilitate compulsive and other problematic types of behavior in users" (Cooper, Delmonico, Griffin-Shelley & Mathy, 2004, p. 131). Consequently, internet characteristics such as sophistication, glamor, accessibility, affordability, and so forth, are often noted as explanatory reasons to general trends of increasing pornography exposure among adolescent populations.

Internet Pornography's Reach to Adolescents

In addition to attributes of the internet that prompt pornography use, other scholars focus attention on the internet's role in increasing pornography's general accessibility. For instance, Eberstadt and Layden (2010) assert that, "Unlike at any other time in history, pornography is now available and consumed widely in our society, due in large part to the internet. No one remains untouched by it" (p. 13). Writers (such as Pamela Paul, author of *Pornified* and a *TIME Magazine* reporter, and writer Ross Douthat of *The Atlantic)* have also commented on the societal issues of pornography exposure and consumption. Douthat describes how,

> Over the past three decades, the VCR, on-demand cable service, and the internet have completely overhauled the ways in which people interact with porn … Nothing in the long history of erotica compares with the way millions of Americans experience porn today, and our moral intuitions are struggling to catch

up.

Although many authors posit pornography exposure rates as soaring, some scholarship suggests that research examining pornography use among normative populations is limited. Carroll et al. (2008), for example, explain that whereas the pornography literature reveals an array of examined topics, "much of this literature is dated, in that it predates the current technological content of pornography" (Buzzell, 2005; Carroll et al., 2008, p. 8). Carroll et al. clarify that previous literature focuses on areas of criminology and clinical treatment of pornography (often including non-normative population samples that involve "extremes of pornography addiction, psychopathology, and criminal behavior") rather than examining mass population use (p. 8). This limitation of a lack of normative data often creates confusion and, at times, contradictory conclusions.

One expanding research area regards pornography exposure among adolescents (e.g., Cooper, Delmonico, Griffin-Sheely, & Matthy, 2004; Cooper et al., 2000; Cooper, Galbreth, & Becker, 2004; Cooper, Putnam, Planchon, & Boies, 1999). Research conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Communication Policy, estimates that close to 90% of adolescents in the United States between the ages of 12 and 18 utilize the internet (2001). In conjunction with this internet use, a growing body of research suggests that adolescents frequently encounter online pornographic content (Peter & Valkenburg, 2006; Ševčikova., Šerek, Machačkova, & Šmahel, 2013; Stahl & Fritz, 2002; Vandoninck, d'Haenens, & Donoso Navarrete, 2010; Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2007). Dividing these studies is research related to adolescents who voluntarily seek exposure to online pornographic material versus adolescents who receive unintentional exposure. In terms of intentional exposure, Stahl and Fritz (2002)

report that 21% of adolescents (*N*=213) from a Midwestern Urban school have visited a pornographic site for at least 3 minutes. Moreover, a 2005 survey revealed that 13% of youth internet users (ages 10 through 17) intentionally visited X-rated websites (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006).

A more recent study incorporating a nationally representative population of youth internet users (*N*=1500) found that 42% of youth internet users ages 10 to 17 were exposed to online pornography; of those exposed, 34% reported what the researchers called wanted exposure whereas 66% reported unwanted exposure (Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2007). Wolak et al. identify *wanted* exposure to pornography as "voluntary" whereas *unwanted* involved exposure to pornography that youth did not purposefully select to view (p. 248). Wolak and colleagues report that wanted exposure rates increased among adolescent males. They also argue that wanted exposure rates increased among youth who "used file-sharing programs to download images, talked online to unknown persons about sex, use the Internet at a friend's home, or scored in the borderline or clinically significant range on the Child Behavior Checklist subscale for rule-breaking" (p. 247). Wolak et al. note that adolescents who used software to monitor, block, or filter internet content reported reduced odds of intentional pornography exposure.

Commenting on accessibility, Wolak and colleagues suggest that increased accessibility of online pornography among adolescents may be a "new phenomenon." They explain:

> This degree of unwanted exposure may be a new phenomenon; before development of the Internet, there were few places youth frequented where they might encounter unsought pornography regularly. Although there is evidence that most youth are not particularly upset when they encounter unwanted pornography

> on the Internet, unwanted exposure could have a greater impact on some youth than voluntary encounters with pornography. Some youth may be psychologically and developmentally unprepared for unwanted exposure, and online images may be more graphic and extreme than pornography available from other sources. (p. 248)

Differentiating between wanted and unwanted pornography exposure may be a game changer when evaluating pornography's reach to adolescents. Consequently, as more adolescents find themselves in situations where they may not be seeking pornography, examining potential impacts of pornography engagement on adolescents becomes useful.

The Impact of Pornography on Adolescents

Parallel to studies addressing pornography's increased ability to reach broader audiences, considerable research regarding the potential harms of pornography has emerged in the last decade. Findings examining the impact of pornography among individuals are somewhat inconclusive and even contradictory (Short, Black, Smith, Wetterneck, & Wells., 2012). For instance, in regards to pornography consumption and adults, some studies report negative effects such as financial, interpersonal, and employment difficulties (Cooper, Morahan-Martin, & Mathy, 2002), emotional struggles (Philaretou, Mahfouz, & Allen, 2005), and general sexual dissatisfaction (Stack, Wasserman, & Kern, 2004). Yet, other research reports positive outcomes of exposure to internet pornography for adults, including stress relief, general decreases in boredom, and an increase in sexual knowledge (Cooper, Galbreath, & Becker, 2004; Hald & Malamuth, 2008; Paul & Shim, 2008).

Perhaps one explanation for contradictory findings among current scholarship involves the diverse age groups among population samples. For instance, Cooper,

Delmonico, Griffin-Shelly, and Mathy (2004) survey men and women ages 18 and older whereas Carroll et al. (2008) use 18-26 as their age range. Consequently, delineating between studies that are relevant to adolescents in contrast to adults that have engaged in years of pornography consumption is necessary.

In addressing this distinction, perhaps the most germane piece that couples pornography research with adolescents is Owens, Behun, Manning, and Reid's (2012) general review. Centering on the query, "What impact, if any, does exposure to Internet pornography have on adolescents?" (p. 101), Owens and colleagues categorize findings into several groupings: these categories include impacts related to sexual attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, sexual aggression, and adolescent body image. Additionally, another, more recent implication that is not accounted for in the examination of Owens et al. involves adolescent pornography use and academic performance. Scholarship related to each of these areas of implications is reviewed below.

Pornography's Impact on Sexual Attitudes and Beliefs

Owens et al. (2012) highlight several studies that acknowledge implications related to online pornography and adolescent sexual attitudes and beliefs. Commencing their review, Owens et al. assert that pornographic messages often present adolescents with a multitude of sexual attitudes and behaviors that may differ from other messages presented in school and familial settings (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008). Peter and Valkenburg note that adolescent exposure to internet pornography can increase adolescent *sexual uncertainty*, or dissonance between sexual beliefs communicated by families and schools in comparison to other knowledge-acquisition sources.

Furthermore, the viewing of online pornography can influence beliefs related to *social realism* (or the extent to which online pornography is viewed as realistic in comparison to reality) and *utility* (or the extent to which adolescents believe online pornography to be a valuable tool to learning about sex and the real world). Consequently, pornography exposure may lead adolescents to develop "unrealistic attitudes about sex and misleading attitudes toward relationships" (Tsitsika et al. 2009, p. 549), as well as increased *sexual preoccupancy*, or the amount of time that adolescents contemplate and/or are distracted by sexual thoughts (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008b).

Owen et al. also note that Peter and Valkenburg's study contrasts Lofgren-Martenson and Manssoons's (2010) investigation. Lofgren-Martenson and Manssoons report that adolescents who view pornography maintain the ability to "distinguish between the fantasy of sexually explicit material and real-life sexual interaction" (Owens et al., p. 104) and that pornography does not lend itself to influencing adolescents' social realism. However, Owens and colleagues offer similarities between Logren-Martenson and Manssoon and other studies. For example, Logren-Martenson and Manssoon suggest that cultural ideals of pornography have shifted from something that was "regarded as shameful and morally reprehensible to something socially accepted" (p. 576). Whereas Logren-Maretenson and Manssoon' piece points to varying conclusions in compared to other research, all reviewed investigations acknowledge that exposure to online pornography can influence certain aspects of adolescents' beliefs.

Another line of research addresses attitudinal implications regarding adolescent engagement with pornography and attitudes toward women. For instance, Peter and Valkenburg (2009) observe that adolescent internet pornography engagement frequently

heightens sexual objectification of women. Additionally, Brown and L'Engle (2009) record a correlation between exposure to online pornography and less progressive descriptions of male and female roles among adolescents. Brown and L'Engle also report pornographic material often reinforces roles such as male dominance and female submission. Consequently, the review of Owens et al. suggests that exposure to pornography can hold negative implications regarding adolescents' sexual attitudes and beliefs—although what impact this exposure has on beliefs/attitudes remains uncertain.

Perhaps even more disconcerting is the transfer of personal beliefs to the larger populace. Carroll et al. (2008), in their survey of emergent adults (ages 18-26) from six universities (*N*=813), report that 67% of young men and close to half of females (49%) expressed acceptability of viewing pornography, with 87% of male participants and 31% of female participants presently accessing pornographic material. Although these scholars note that future research should include a more expansive population, it becomes intriguing to hypothesize the impact that personal beliefs derived from exposure to pornographic material—whether it be an increased acceptance of premarital/extramarital sexual relations, the view that women are synonymous with sexual objects, an increase in sexual preoccupancy, or the notion that internet pornography provides a realistic view of sex—educe on the general acceptance of pornography as a whole.

Pornography and Adolescent Sexual Behaviors

In addition to impacts associated with sexual attitudes and beliefs, Owens et al. (2012) examine adolescent behavioral research in regards to pornography exposure. Scholars commence this section by stating the following: "There is agreement in the

literature suggesting that adolescents can learn sexual behaviors from observing the behaviors depicted in sexually explicit material" (p. 107). Owens et al. identify behaviors frequently associated with exposure to internet pornography, including partner expectations and demands related to sexual activities (Haggstrom-Nordin, Sandberg, & Tyde´n, 2006), the acceptance of and more frequent engagement in sexually permissive behaviors (Lo & Wei, 2005), as well as earlier first-time experiences with oral sex and sexual intercourse (Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Haggstrom-Nordin, Hanson, & Tyden, T., 2005).

Haggstrom-Nordin et al. (2005) report a high correlation between adolescents who consume pornography and sexual activity. In their investigation of Swedish high school students (*N*=718), 98% of male and 76% of female students reported consuming pornography, with 75% of the overall sample reported to have had sexual intercourse. Haggstrom-Nordin et al. highlight that the majority of participants suggested that consumption of pornography influenced the sexual behaviors of peers, but only 29% of participants believed that such exposure influenced individual sexual behavior.

Haggstrom-Nordin et al. further report that adolescents regularly exposed to pornography stated earlier ages of sexual intercourse in comparison to adolescents who were not regularly exposed. Kraus and Russell (2008) present findings similar to Haggstrom-Nordin et al., arguing that "the Internet, which often promotes and sells sexually explicit material, may be acting as an accelerant for earlier reported ages for first oral sex and first sexual intercourse" (p. 166).

Other examinations report findings contrary to the conclusions of Haggstrom-Nordin et al. and Kraus and Russell. For instance, Luder et al. (2010), in their

exploration of sexual behaviors and adolescent pornography exposure, report that "the majority of risky sexual behaviors, such as early sexual initiation, multiple sexual partners or a history of pregnancy were not associated with sexually explicit material exposure whether it was voluntary or not" (p. 6). Yet again, further research is needed to provide greater depth to the extensiveness that exposure to pornographic material influences individual beliefs and subsequent actions.

Other scholars note a connection between pornography use and drug and alcohol-use during sex (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). Owens et al. incorporate Brown, Keller, and Stern's (2009) findings, arguing that adolescents who receive minimal sexual education, yet witness "high risk sexual practices in sexually explicit material […] are more likely to engage in some form of high-risk sexual behavior themselves" (Owens et al., p. 108). Some scholars do suggest, nonetheless, that more recent findings contradict these conclusions, arguing that risky behavior is not correlated to pornography consumption (Luder et al., 2010). Thus, in synthesizing the above studies, greater research is needed to explore the variables associated with pornographic exposure and adolescent behavioral implications. Specifically, studies should work to clarify the extent to which adolescents consume pornography in relation to behavioral implications, address population differences in regards to exposure, as well as explore the contexts and/or motivations linked to exposure and behavior.

Pornography and Adolescent Sexual Aggression

Other scholarship explores the link between pornography exposure and sexual aggression (Alexy, Burgess, & Prentky, 2009; Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Malamuth &

Huppin, 2005; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005). Echoing Flood's (2009) conclusions that pornography consumption can lead to "emotional disturbance, sexual knowledge and liberalized attitudes, shifts in sexual behaviour, and sexist and objectifying understandings" (p. 384), Ybarra, Michell, Hamburger, Diener-West (2011) observed that adolescents who voluntarily exposed themselves to violent pornographic material were 6 times more likely to be sexually aggressive in comparison to others who were not exposed. However, other scholars record varying conclusions. For example, Ybarra and Mitchell (2005) assert that, generally speaking, a correlation between sexual aggression and consumption of pornography *is not* present among the majority of males. However, as Owens et al. point out, these scholars suggest that males who illustrate predispositions towards aggressive sexual behavior exhibit 4 times higher levels of sexual aggression in conjunction with pornography consumption.

Adding to this literature, Malmuth and Huppin (2005) propose that whereas certain combinations of risk factors predict levels of sexual aggression, pornography consumption can have impact on altering previous attitudes, including attitudes towards the acceptance of violence against women. Specifically, high-risk adolescent males "are likely to be changed by such exposure, such as changes in attitudes about the acceptance of violence against women" (p. 323-24). Moreover, in a longitudinal piece, Brown and L'Engle (2009) contend that overlap exists between early adolescent pornography consumption and instances of sexual harassment. These scholars record that high-risk males who consume pornography during adolescence illustrate increased instances of sexual harassment during mid-adolescence. Ybarra et al. (2011) share similar conclusions, reporting that adolescents who intentionally exposed themselves to violent

pornographic material were six times more likely to exhibit sexually aggressive behaviors than those not exposed. The research synthesis of Owens et al. suggests that individual disposition as well as the types of pornography consumed (e.g., nonviolent versus violent) can be contributing factors to whether or not pornography use heightens adolescent sexual aggression.

Body Image and Social Development

Another area of pornography's impact relates to adolescents' self-concept and body image. Although the overall amount of research is limited, Owens et al. (2012) utilize a few key studies to prompt further investigations. In regards to self-concept, Haggstrom-Nordin et al. (2006) report that pornographic material often posits ideas that place males in positions of power and dominance. This conclusion is comparative to Brown and L'Engle's (2009) research on adolescent pornography consumptions and correlating beliefs related to less progressive views of gender roles. Additionally, Lofgren-Martenson and Mansson (2010) explore pornography's role in relation to what authors coin as "pornographic scripts." For adolescent males, pornography consumption can lead to personal insecurities, particularly in regards to sexual performance. Insecurities supporting negative body image and the ideal body type were reported among female participants.

Lofgren-Martenson and Masson also observed higher senses of personal self-confidence among males who reported minimal use of pornography consumption. Mesch (2009) reports similar findings, suggesting that adolescents who stated higher degrees of social interactions and personal relationships were not as likely to consume pornography,

specifically in comparison with less social peers. Adding to this area, Valkenburg and Peter (2011) outline three elements that the internet frequently provides to teens in terms of building their self-regard. These areas are the approval of others, the acceptance from others, and the feeling of a general control over one's environment. Owens et al. conclude that "these factors may speak to adolescents' frequent use of the Internet as a means of communication" (p. 110).

Pornography Use and Adolescent Academic Performance

One area not investigated by Owens et al. is the connection between adolescent pornography use and academic performance. Beyens, Vandenbosch, and Eggermont (2014) suggest that the role of academic performance plays a part in adolescents' overall well-being and development. Moreover, previous research links low academic achievement to decreased levels of social skills (Malecki & Elliot, 2002), earlier onsets of sexual engagement, and as a whole, suggests high academic achievers are often less likely to participate in risky behaviors (Jessor, Costa, Jessor, & Donovan, 1983; Jessor & Jessor, 1977). Derived from these observations, media researchers turned their attention towards the effects of adolescents' engagement with certain media and academic performance. For instance, previous research connects poor academic performance to extensive television viewing and/or internet use (Chen & Peng, 2008; Hancox, Milne, & Poulton, 2005; Sharif, Wills, & Sargent, 2010; Tremblay et al., 2011).

In narrowing the scope of academic performance and media use, researchers have also examined correlations between academic performance and pornography consumption. For instance, Wittwer and Senkbeil (2008) report a connection between

college students' use of pornography and lower scores in academic performance. Concerning the adolescent population, Beyens et al. (2014) observed that increased levels of pornography consumption correlate to decreased academic performance among boys over a 6-month period. Intriguingly, authors report that this finding surfaced in a second-wave analysis--even after controlling for academic performance variables among boys during the first wave of study.

Accounting for this outcome, Beyens et al. coin the term the *time-displacement effect* as a central argument to explain links between media use and low academic performance. Beyens and colleagues describe this effect when individuals "displace" their time to media-related activities (e.g., the use of social networking sites, video gaming, viewing pornographic content, etc.) from time that could be used for other activities, such as academic preparation and study. Authors also include Agarwal and Karahanna's (2000) *cognitive absorption hypothesis*, or an explanatory hypothesis that accounts for time loss among individuals when they engage in an activity that is "highly pleasurable, excites cognitive and sensory curiosity and arouses imagination" (Beyens et al., 2014, p. 5). Research suggests that technological activities such as videogames (Barnes & Pressey, 2014) and social networking usage (Rouis, 2012) can result in cognitive absorption, even to the extent that this absorption holds impact on making other types of activities (such as academic work) seem less important and inferior.

Commenting on this variable, Beyens et al. posit that adolescents experience increased degrees of cognitive absorption when viewing pornographic content, "that is, a complete involvement because of the pleasurable and exciting nature of the pornographic content," and that this absorption "may lead to insufficient consideration of homework or

studying, and, consequently, result in poor academic performance" (p. 5). Scholars suggest that future research should work to incorporate the variables of time-displacement and cognitive absorption as possible explanatory or complementary factors in regards to adolescent academic performance and pornography use.

Although a greater degree of research is needed to address the effects of exposure to pornography and adolescents, a general summation of the previous scholarly reviews suggests that pornography is prevalent and can be harmful to adolescents. As Eberstadt and Layden (2010) summarize,

> Overall, the body of research on pornography reveals a number of negative attitudes and behaviors that are connected with its use. It functions as a teacher, a permission-giver, and a trigger of these negative behaviors and attitudes. The damage is seen in men, women, and children, and to both married and single adults. It involves pathological behaviors, illegal behaviors, and some behaviors that are both illegal and pathological. (p. 7)

In addition to scholarly, peer-reviewed explorations, additional observations from therapists and practitioners who work with adolescents who struggle with pornography consumption report the following:

> Those who claim pornography is harmless entertainment, benign sexual expression, or a marital aid, have clearly never sat in a therapist's office with individuals, couples, or families who are reeling from the devastating effects of this material. (Manning, 2010)

Be it from scholarship or professional experience, the literature prompts that further consideration should be taken into account as to how adolescent pornography exposure and consumption is conceptualized and, perhaps more importantly, be used as a resource in prompting greater education to stakeholders that hold influence to combat such exposure. Accordingly, one key stakeholder in the discussion of adolescents and pornography are parents. The following section explores the role parents play in assisting

adolescents to avoid the aforementioned attitudinal, behavioral, social, educationally, and developmentally influential implications of pornography use.

Where Do We Go Next? Parental Influences in Combating Pornography

With the level of potential negative effects significant, an average age of exposure for children at around age 11 (Ropelato, 2007), and the number of those impacted on the rise, scholarship relating to preventing adolescent pornography consumption becomes increasingly relevant. Yet, perhaps due to the novelty of technology's role in increasing distribution of pornography among adolescents, much of the current research focuses on the aftermath of pornography rather than specific means to combat it. For example, Wolak, Mitchell, and Finkelhor (2007) conclude,

> In addition to research about whether and under what circumstances viewing online pornography affects sexual behavior and psychological heath of youth, we need information about factors that could influence youth reactions to online pornography, such as family attitudes, psychological attributes, formats and contents of pornography, effects of group dynamics among youth, and whether and under what circumstances unwanted exposure may lead to wanted exposure (or vice versa). (p. 256)

Scholarship concerning adolescent pornography preventative methods is sparse. However, informative findings related to pornography interventions are beginning to emerge. For example, in addition to an overarching focus on the complexity of wanted versus unwanted exposure among adolescents, these scholars also offer findings directed towards successful pornography prevention. Wolack and colleagues identify actions such as (1) talking to either a parent/adult about seeing pornographic content on the internet; (2) the use of software that monitors, filters, and/or blocks usage of the internet (as opposed to relying on popup blockers); and (3) adolescents attending an internet safety

presentation led by law enforcement, as the three more influential preventative means. The authors record the top two means of preventing exposure were software filters, which reduced exposure rates by 40%, and law enforcement presentations, which reduced exposure rates by 30%. Scholars theorize that adolescents may be more likely to pay attention to or grant weight to antipornography messages shared by an authority figure in comparison to other presenters.

Wolak et al. (2007) further note that parent-child pornography communication did not serve as the most successful preventative means within their population. However, Wolak et al. theorize that perhaps the central reason for ineffectiveness was because the majority of conversations took place *after* exposure to pornography had already occurred. Wolak et al. go on to argue that, "Frank direct conversations with youth that address the possible influences of pornography on sexual behavior, attitudes about sex, and relationships are needed […]" (p. 255). Wolak et al. point to a developing theme observed in other investigations. More specifically, some scholars suggest that parents play a large role in assisting children to navigate through risky materials that are frequently accessed online. Consequently, research relating to parent-child communication is relevant in addressing how such actions may influence children's resistance to pornography.

Parent-Child Communication and Pornography Communication: Links Among Family Environments, "Openness," Parenting Styles, and Active Mediation

A review of parent-child communication literature argues several benefits of parents positively communicating with their children. For instance, Henry (1994) and Jackson, Bijstra, Oostra, and Bosma (1998) correlate characteristics such as greater personal development, overall well-being, higher self-esteem, and an expansion in coping strategies with adolescents' views of positive parental communication. Additionally, other research suggests that a lack in positive parent-child communication increases the likelihood for adolescent substance abuse (Barnes, Farrell, & Banerjee, 1996; Kilpatrick et al., 2000) overall delinquency (Coughlin & Vuchinich, 1996), and self-harm (Tulloch, Blizzard, & Pinkus, 1997). Pertinent to this study's exploration, other scholars affirm correlations between minimal positive parent-child communication and increased premarital sexual activities (Karofsky, Zeng, & Kosorok, 2000). Several scholars assert that open, positive, and frequent parent-child communication about sexual topics serves as a vital element to adolescent sexual socialization; accordingly, proper sexual socialization behavioral outcomes are frequently connected to adolescent abstinence, postponing intercourse, using contraception more consistently, and overall fewer sexual partners (DiIorio, Pluhar, & Belcher, 2003; Markham et al., 2010; Miller, Benson, & Galbraith, 2001). Consequently, parent-child sexual research is often used to explore connections between family environment and parenting attributes as they relate to adolescent-pornography research.

Three research studies offer specific implications to parent-child pornography

communication. The first, more directly-related investigation explores the relationship between family environment, pornography, and sexual behavior. In an investigation of 9,142 Iranian students, Heidari, Kazemi, and Nikmanesh (2012) incorporate Schafer's Family Environment Scale (FES) as a means to measure and conceptualize students' family environments. FES includes the spectrums of "control – freedom" and "warmness – coldness" to describe the family environment; this spectrum is in conjunction with an adolescent pornography consumption scale and a sexual behavioral scale (both developed by the authors). Unfortunately, scholars do not provide details regarding the construction or implementation of scales. Heidari, Kazemi, and Nikmanesh also do not operationalize significant terms, such as "pornography, "control," "freedom," "warmness" and "coldness." Nonetheless, results indicate that the terms "coldness" and "freedom" in family environments correlate to adolescent pornography consumption. Scholars suggest that as pornography consumption can be influenced by family relationships, "it is important to regulate these relationships by education of adolescents and by purposive workshops for the parents" (p.168).

Another, more detailed, study that relates to parent-child pornography communication is Byrne and Lee's (2011) "Toward Predicting Youth Resistance to Internet Risk Prevention Strategies." Although this examination undertakes a slightly different perspective through the exploration of parental communication styles and degrees of technology prevention resistance by youth, Byrne and Lee offer applicable findings. The authors examine several influential factors that may play a role in influencing youth resistance to parental internet strategies. These factors include gender and age, political ideology, attitudes toward the internet, as well as parenting style and

open communication. Byrne and Lee contend that, above all other investigated variables, the degree of open parent-child communication served as the most significant factor in predicating if a child resists prevention strategies. Simply put, "the more both parties found it difficult to talk to one another, the more likely the kids were to resist the idea of their parents accessing their Internet worlds" (p. 106).

Byrne and Lee's statement places emphasis on parental abilities to communicate with adolescents, or what some scholars identify as levels of "openness." In conceptualizing this term, Dailey (2006) describes *openness* as the "disclosing or discussing thoughts, feelings, or viewpoints about the self, others, or events" (p. 435). Assessing the implications of parent-child openness, Dailey suggests that adolescents frequently react more positively to "responsive and accepting parents" in comparison to "rejecting and judgmental parents," and that parents set the stage of adolescent openness in younger ages (p. 435). Dailey goes on to assert that adolescents play a larger role "in creating the relational climates as well as their own openness" and, subsequently, should not be discounted as key players. Maccoby and Martin (1983) assert that the presence of an open communicative environment within parent-child relationships correlates with mutual respect, as well as greater levels of adolescent compliance and agreement to parental mediation strategies. Cultivating characteristics such as responsiveness and mutual respect may be a useful asset to parents, particularly in engaging in conversations with children that are considered difficult or sensitive in nature.

Byrne and Lee further incorporate the influence of parenting styles as a significant contribution linked to parent-child openness. *Parenting styles*, or approaches that highlight parental "attempt[s] to influence the behaviors of their children through the

expression of control" (Byrne and Lee, 2011, p. 94), often incorporate three central styles, including permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative approaches (Baumrind, 1967, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Byrne and Lee explain each of these styles, stating,

> Permissive parents tend to be more lenient and indulgent in order to avoid confrontation with their children—allowing considerable self-regulation. Authoritarian parents expect high levels of obedience without explanation and provide strict non-negotiable rule sets. Authoritative parents walk the line between being responsive to their children's thoughts and ideas, yet firm about expectations in the household. (p. 94)

Evaluating parenting styles and internet prevention strategies, Byrne and Lee record that permissive parents communicated difficultly in addressing the dangers of the internet with their children. Byrne and Lee further suggest that parents that engaged in an authoritarian style (where children were provided a set of rules without further communication) expressed an easier time in speaking with children. Yet, authors contend that the most productive prevention method involved the use of the *authoritative style*, which consists of a blend of both authoritarian and permissive (e.g. "a balance of open communication and control" p. 105). Byrne and Lee report that authoritative parents experienced the greatest success in both parental communication of internet restrictions and child compliance with this communication; authors argue that the authoritative approach holds further benefits as it works to increase children's ability to critically assess media. Consequently, the development of media assessment skills could be considered useful, particularly when children come into contact with material they are unfamiliar with or uncertain about, such as pornography.

Perhaps the most germane research related to parent-child pornography communication was conducted by Rasmussen, Ortiz, and White (2015). Entitled

"Emerging Adults' Responses to Active Mediation of Pornography during Adolescence," Rasmussen et al. explore the concept of active mediation, or "parent-child discussion of the media or media content that is intended to impact how and the extent to which children are influenced by media exposure," and its relationship to adolescent and emergent adult pornography consumption and related outcomes (Rasmussen, 2013, p. 384). Through retrospective surveying (see also Austin & Chen, 2003; Guo & Nathanson, 2011; Harrison & Cantor, 1999; Nathanson, 2001, 2002), Rasmussen et al. evaluate active mediation in conjunction with 313 emerging adults' perceptions of pornography use, self-esteem, and attitudes towards pornography.

Results indicate that emergent adults whose parents practiced active mediation about pornography during adolescence (or more consistently engaged in parent-child pornography communication) conveyed significantly less positive attitudes towards pornography. In turn, negative attitudes concerning pornography correlated to a reduction in emergent adults' pornography use. Rasmussen et al. link these findings to other investigations that conclude active mediation can alter adolescent beliefs and attitudes about media content and/or serve as a motivation to direct attention towards or avoid certain media content (Fisher et al., 2009; Nathanson, 2001, 1999).

Other findings suggest that parents were no more likely to discuss pornography with boys than they were with girls. Furthermore, the act of "getting caught" or parents discovering that a child was viewing and/or had viewed pornography was associated with increased levels of active mediation, although Rasmussen et al. report that parents were no more likely to discuss pornography with boys who were "caught" in comparison to girls who were "caught."

In terms of self-esteem, Rasmussen et al. propose that effective active mediation served as a protective barrier to the self-esteems of emergent adults whose sexual partner regularly views pornography. Rasmussen et al. posit:

> Talking to adolescents about the negative effects of pornography appears to build the resilience of emerging adults when they become involved in a relationship with somebody whose actions could otherwise damage their self-esteem. Thus, active mediation appears to be a specific form of communication that enables adolescents and emerging adults to effectively navigate the complex interpersonal situations (Lanz et al.,1999; Noller, 1995) that may alter how they feel about themselves. (p. 11)

Derived from the conclusions of Rasmussen et al., the act of parent-child pornography communication may elicit substantial benefits to adolescents: these potential benefits include (1) an increased negativity towards pornography; (2) reduced consumption of pornography as an emergent adult; and (3) the building of resiliency and possible interpersonal navigational skills that may be impactful to one's self-esteem. Yet, despite these outcomes, Rasmussen et al. surmise that a substantial number of parents do not engage in active mediation about pornography with their children. The authors theorize that parents may not discuss pornography with children because they are unaware of increasing accessibility of pornographic content, uninformed of the negative risks associated with viewing pornography during adolescence, and/or utilize a permissive parenting approach to children's internet use.

Suggestions for Parents Addressing Pornography With Children

Heidari, Kazemi, and Nikmanesh's (2012), Byrne and Lee (2011), and Rasmussen, Ortiz, and White (2015)'s works highlight several variables (such as family environmental factors, levels of openness, parental approaches, and active mediation) that

are productive in parental interventions regarding adolescent pornography exposure. However, to date, these studies are among the few that explore the implications of parents' use of these tactics in protecting children from pornography. Some scholars offer recommendations of parent-child pornography communication as they relate to family/sexual research. Greenfield (2004), for example, presents an argument for parent-child pornography communication in her testimony concerning children exposed to pornography via peer-to-peer file sharing networks to the Congressional Committee on Government Reform. She states the following:

> A warm and communicative parent–child relationship is the most important nontechnical means that parents can use to deal with the challenges of the sexualized media environment, including peer-to-peer file-sharing networks. In addition, open parent–child channels for communicating about sexual and media experiences, sex education at home or school, and parental participation with children on the Internet are constructive influences. (p. 741)

Phrases such as "warm and communicative," "open parent-child channels," and "parental participation with children on the Internet" highlight qualities that Greenfield acknowledges as useful tools in addressing pornography with adolescents. To support these qualities, Greenfield cites several relevant research examinations. Articulated as the "nontechnical means" parents can incorporate to assist with the challenges of adolescent pornography exposure, Greenfield suggests that parents should, first, "maintain an open family communication style" (p. 747). Supporting this assertion, Greenfield incorporates Miller, Benson, and Galbraith's (2001) review of adolescent pregnancy synthesis, which argues that a warm, communicative parent-child relationship can minimize adolescent sexual risk taking (Miller et atl., 2001). Second, Greenfield asserts that communication about a particular topic is less important than developing a warm, communicative parent-child relationship as a whole. Such a relationship fosters

the ability and comfort levels essential for children to discuss difficult issues with parents in a manner that is nonjudgmental or threatening. Third, Greenfield suggests to "Be open to discussing sex with your children" (p. 747). Supporting this claim, Bryant and Rockwell (1994) report that an open family communication style mitigated the effects of moral judgments made by 13 and 14 year-olds concerning nonmarital sex observed on prime-time television. Moreover, other scholars argue that individuals raised in family environments where little discussion on sexual topics occurs are often more vulnerable to the effects of sexually explicit media than individuals raised with sexual education (Gunter, 2002; Malamuth & Billings, 1986).

Another recommendation offered by Greenfield relates to the benefits of parents and children co-viewing media and internet usage. In an investigation that included thousands of high school students, Peterson, Moore, and Furstenberg (1991) observed that females who had minimal discussions and experiences with parental figures had nearly twice the sexual experiences in comparison to families where media experiences were shared. Livingstone and Helsper (2008) add to Greenfield's recommendation, asserting that strategic placements of media access to more public household areas (such as a family room or living room) may encourage parent-child discussion. Moreover, Byrne and Lee (2011) suggest that co-viewing followed by parent-child dialogue can serve as a development tool in building children's ability to critically assess media.

Broadening the Scope of Parent-Child Pornography Communication to Sexual Communication

As mentioned, several scholars link adolescent views of communication with their parents to personal development, higher self-esteem, greater well-being, and the

development of more positive coping strategies (Henry, 1994; Jackson et al., 1998). Other scholars contend the necessity of parent-child pornography communication as a central, antipornography prevention tool (Byrne & Lee, 2011; Greenfield, 2004; Heidari, Kazemi, & Nikmanesh, 2012; Rasmussen, Ortiz, & White, 2015). These studies offer justification to the value of parents communicating with their children about pornography. Yet, in some cases, some may argue that it becomes challenging to discuss pornography without addressing sexual topics in general. Consequently, a review of more broad research related to parent-child sexual communication, as well as some of the challenges parents may face when addressing pornography, is pertinent.

Parental Influence in Sexual Conversations

The topic of parents addressing sexual topics with children has been vastly explored. Numerous scholars contend that parent-child communication about sexual issues constitutes an important element of sexual socialization--specifically in relation to remaining abstinent, using contraception more consistently, postponing intercourse, and having fewer sexual partners (DiIorio, Pluhar, & Belcher, 2003; Markham et al., 2010; Miller et al., 2001). However, much of the literature suggests that parents universally struggle with discussing sexual topics with children (Dilorio et al., 2003; Jerman & Constantine, 2010). Reasons relating to this difficulty are continuing to be investigated, particularly in regards to possible demographic, socio-demographic, and psychological predictors.

Other scholars pose that the large majority of parents have engaged in a sexual discussion with their children, although adolescents are reluctant to admit that these

conversations transpire (Miller, 1998). Consistent with Miller's conclusion, O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahldburg, and Watkins (2001) argue that parental conversations about sex are often initiated through observations of their children's social (e.g., interest in the opposite sex) and physical (e.g., puberty) changes during early adolescence. Accounting for the topics discussed by mothers, Whitaker and Miller (2000) conclude that 51% of their sample addressed the use of condoms and sexual initiation with their 14- to 16-year-old children. In addition, parents frequently focus sexual conversation on biological observations rather than romantic and/or interpersonal details (Whitaker & Miller, 2000).

Somers and Paulson (2000) add that many parents experience feelings of embarrassment when charged to address sexual topics with their children; these authors acknowledge that such feelings may lead to greater reluctance in addressing the more intimate dimensions of sexual involvement. Jaccard, Dittus, and Gordon's (2000) research parallels Somers and Paulson's conclusions, asserting that mothers frequently become embarrassed and/or fear that adolescents will not take them seriously should they engage in parent-child sexual communication. Jaccard, Dittus, and Gordon further identify 21 varying reservations mothers convey when asked to address sexual topics with children. Top motherly reservations include (1) feeling inept or holding inadequate knowledge to explain sexual information; (2) thinking that parent-child sexual conversations will go poorly; (3) a lack in self-efficacy to communicate about sexual topics; (4) situational constraints; and (5) the fear of encouraging increased sexual behavior among adolescents.

Other researchers focus on the role that biological sex (of both the child and parent) plays as a discussion predictor. In regards to sexual socialization, some

researchers argue that mothers more so than fathers communicate more information about sexuality and surrounding issues (DiIorio, Kelley, & Hockenberry-Eaton, 1999; Miller, Kotchick, Dorsey, Forehand, & Ham, 1998). Studies suggest that mothers are more likely to converse with their daughters than with sons, whereas fathers are more likely to talk with their sons than daughters about sexual subjects (DiIorio et al., 2003; Swain, Ackerman, & Ackerman, 2006). Researchers indicate that, overall, parents are more likely to converse with their adolescent daughters in comparison to their adolescent sons (Downie & Coates, 1999; Raffaelli, Bogenschneider, & Flood, 1998).

Another area of research involves the topics discussed during parent-child sexual communication. For instance, when questioned about subjects addressed, mothers more so than fathers focus on negative consequences of sex, as well as how and where to obtain birth control (Swain et al., 2006). Other studies suggest that the messages conveyed to adolescents in accordance to their biological sex reflect "a sexual double standard" (Morgan, Throne, & Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 140). For example, sexual messages from parents to adolescent sons are often centered on sexual exploration and pleasure (Downie & Coates, 1999; Moore & Rosenthal, 1991). Contrastingly, messages directed towards adolescent daughters are frequently more restrictive, placing emphasis on the negative consequences of sexual activity and methods to ensure greater sexual protection (Downie & Coates, 1999; O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & Watkins, 2001).

Another noteworthy area within parent-child sexual communication research involves perspectives of participants. As illustrated by the aforementioned studies, much of the parent-child sexual communication literature places its lens of analysis from a parental standpoint. However, other scholars provide insight to the adolescents'

viewpoint. DiIorio, Kelley, and Hockenberry-Eaton (1999) contend that both male and female adolescents report being more likely to engage in sexual-based topics with mothers in comparison to fathers. These scholars further note that sons more than daughters express greater comfort in talking with fathers about sexual topics

In addition to biological sex interactions, other scholars offer insight into how the age of a child affects parent-child engagement of sexual communication. Whereas little research explorations pinpoint a specific age of children when parents begin discussing sexual topics with children, indeed, some studies report that regardless of children's age, parent-child communication about sexual topics may occur too late (Somers & Paulson, 2000). Askelson, Campo, and Smith (2011) state, "More research needs to be conducted to better understand the factors that potentially influence the topics and timing of parent-child communication in the area of sexual health" (p. 439). Byers, Sears, and Weaver's (2008) research contributes to this notion, indicating that less frequent but more extensive sexual talk often occurs between parents and children. Moreover, Somers and Paulson (2000) posit that many parents begin to discuss sexual topics with their children only after an observation has been established that a sexual behavior is occurring. Perhaps parents may have an increased impact on their children's sexual socialization if discussions regarding this subject happen earlier (Somers & Paulson, 2000).

The sexual communication literature provides insight as to why many parents may view parent-child pornography communication as a daunting area of conversation. Multiple variables such as age of child, sex of parent, topics to be discussed, depth of conversation, and so forth, can be overwhelming. Accordingly, much of the literature suggests that sexual communication is an area that many parents struggle with (Dilorio et

al., 2003; Jerman & Constantine, 2010). Patterns in the sexual literature posit that three variables serve as strong predictors whether parents select to address sexuality with children, including *self-reported comfort* (e.g., how comfortable parents feel about addressing sexual topics with children), *sexual knowledge*, and *sexual communication openness*. Sexual openness can be hindered by what Somers and Paulson (2000) describe as emotional hesitancies. For instance, feelings of embarrassment or general reluctance are often expressed by parents in accordance to being charged to address sexual topics with children. Somers and Paulson also contend that, frequently, parents tend to address sexual topics as an observational afterthought. This act can present greater strains on parent-child relationships as children may feel attacked or judged because conversation is derived from a consequence of action.

Challenges Associated With Parents Addressing Pornography With Children

Concepts such as parental self-report comfort, knowledge, and general communication openness have potentially broad application abilities in examining parent-child pornography communication. Yet, in relating these aspects of sexual communication to parent-child pornography communication, many other conversational challenges come into play. Other difficulties may include adolescents' struggles to communicate with parents, ambiguity in defining and identifying pornography, increasing levels of societal acceptance of pornography, as well as obstacles that the element of technology holds to parents unfamiliar with an evolving technological world.

Communication Challenges Between Parents and Adolescents

Whereas many studies acknowledge parental difficulties in talking with children about sexual topics, other research offers insight to the struggle of adolescents communicating with their parents in general. Although focus for parent-child sexual communication is frequently geared towards a parental perspective, other scholars examined the levels of comfort that children report in being able to talk with their parents. For instance, based on data drawn from over 100,000 adolescents nationwide, Benson, Galbraith, and Espeland (1998) suggest that only 1 out of 4 adolescents report that their parents are available and approachable to converse. This finding could be attributed to the dissonance in relationship that many parents and children experience when a child reaches early adolescence, particularly as lesser degrees of physical affection are expressed among both parties. Furthermore, the age-range of 10-14 often involves parents and children spending less time with each other (Stemmler & Petersen, 1999), which implies that general communication between both parties decreases. In addition, other scholars suggest that many adolescents experience difficulties discussing emotionally laden issues with their parents—insofar as particular topics may be considered embarrassing or, from an adolescent's perspective, that parents may simply be unable to relate or understand (Brackis-Cott, Mellins, & Block, 2003; Tucker, Barber, & Eccles, 2000). Thus, scholars recommend that parents should seek communicative subjects in which adolescents can share common ground, and accordingly, not impose views regarding the need for greater communication on their children (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999).

Along with adolescent-parent struggles to communicate, another challenge relates

to varying parent and adolescent perspectives/ability to define the word "pornography." As previously mentioned, a review of the pornography literature reveals the use of differing definitions of the word "pornography" among scholars—with each definitional use holding specific implications to the design, implementation, analysis, and assessment of the study. Accordingly, similar ambiguities may also emerge when parents converse with adolescents about pornography. For instance, the following questions may prove useful in exploring disparities among parental definitions of pornography and their subsequent impact on parent-child conversation: What are some of the linguistic terms and phrases used by parents to define pornography? Is pornography identified/associated more with the medium that it is accessed by (e.g., the internet) or the content that is portrayed? If parents discuss pornography with adolescents, what terms do they use to define pornography? and Do parents use the word "pornography" to define it? As outlined, varying levels of uncertainty may be present in addressing parent-child conversations about pornography. Consequently, further depth is needed in understanding parental perceptions of pornography, particularly in educating parents to become more involved in pornography conversations with adolescents.

Increased Acceptance of Pornography Use

In addition to ambiguity with the word "pornography," another obstacle relates to increasing societal acceptance of pornography use. As noted earlier, most parents agree that talking with their children about sexual topics is important. However, does this same notion remain true in relation to parents discussing pornography with adolescents? For example, Poulsen and Busby (2013) argue the presence of two broad social scripts that

individuals frequently utilize to construct meaning regarding pornography consumption. The first script highlights the use of pornography as a means to enhance sexual relationships; consequently, views related to this standpoint argue that pornography is a way to broaden sexual understanding (Warner, 2000), as well as create or enhance an erotic climate (Daneback, Traeen, & Mansson, 2009). Contrasting to this perspective, Poulsen and Busby further contend that the second major social script—which as they point out is consistent with existing clinical literature—argues that the usage of pornography has two central negative implications: (1) it is a form of infidelity within a relationship (Schneider, 2002), and (2), it is deviant in nature as it objectifies women.

For parents and adolescents, differences of beliefs may create tensions in parent-child pornography communication. In essence, some parents may choose not to address pornography with adolescents because they do not view anything inherently negative or deviant to the act of viewing pornographic content. Thus, some parents may choose to even encourage adolescent pornography consumption as ideologies related to the enhancement of sexuality through pornographic content become prevalent. In regards to this research, it is therefore plausible that parents may express feelings concerning adolescent pornography use on a wide spectrum—from positivity, discontentment, to even apathy. Consequently, it is important to note that various parental viewpoints may surface in future investigations. Therefore, researchers need to be open to hearing a number of perspective in exploring parent-child pornography communication.

Parental Fears and Knowledge Gap of the Online World

One final challenge relates to parental unfamiliarity with technologies used to access pornography. Scholars propose that parents' knowledge and interest in teen activities benefit adolescent social adjustment and development (Sorbring & Lundin, 2012; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Yet, further research posits that, often, parents hold limited knowledge regarding their child's internet experience, and communicate that parental internet supervision is difficult due to the ease of accessibility for many teens (Cho & Cheon, 2005; Liau & Khoo, 2008). Moreover, Wang, Bianchi, and Raley (2005) observe that many parents feel their teens are more competent with technology then they are, particularly as technology continues to change and evolve. Consequently, parental attempts to discuss and set boundaries become taxing, and in some cases, difficult to enforce.

A second technological obstacle is parents' ability to access resources to promote parent-children pornography communication. For many, the online world provides opportunity for a wealth of obtainable knowledge. The same holds true for online pornography communication starter guides. Antipornography organizations often include conversation strategies and tips that can help parents become more informed about the harms of exposure to children. For instance, the online homepage of the organization Women for Decency (a nonprofit organization aimed "to educate, unite, and mobilize women to safeguard home, family, and community from obscenity and pornography," Women for Decency, 2013) has a link entitled, "How to Talk to Kids." Scrolling over the link reveals sub topics such as "What should I Teach my Children," "Conversations with Kids," Internet Safety Pledges," "Family Media Guidelines," and "One-Minute

Conversation Starters." These links serve as a valuable resource in educating parents on how to generate and hold conversations regarding pornography.

Similar to the Women for Decency's website, many other resources exist on the web. However, as some parents experience distress concerning new technologies, two questions emerge: First, does a parent's ability to access online resources physically play a role in whether or not they will discuss pornography with their children? Second, do parents hold the necessary technological skills and literacy to search, select, and access relevant resources? For instance, a parent may express the desire to discuss pornography issues, specifically if they become aware that their child may be involved. However, if the parent does not have access to a computer to search for related information and/or does not hold the necessary skill set to do so, they may experience frustration and/or hesitation in initiating such a conversation. As the parent-child sexual communication literature indicates, parents become more likely to engage in sexual conversations with their children if they hold a higher sense of self-efficacy, comprehension, and openness to sexual topics (Jerman & Constantine, 2010). Thus, parents having limited online access to pornography discussion resources might face further stress and anxiety in addressing the topic.

Parental difficulties to address pornography and technology with children may relate to a number of factors. For instance, if a parent finds that her adolescent has been exposed to pornography and is now viewing pornographic material images several hours a day through the internet, addressing/monitoring this behavior becomes problematic if (1) the parent finds it difficult to define what pornography is with her adolescent, (2) the parent believes pornography use is beneficial for the adolescent, (3) the parent feels

uncomfortable discussing issues related to pornography exposure partially because the parent fears or has a low self-efficacy in sexual and/or technology communication, (4) the parent has limited knowledge about technology use and does not have the necessary skills to construct a web filter, and (5) the parent cannot access important resources through the internet that can assist addressing pornography with adolescents. These scenarios and others create complexity in parent-child pornography communication. Not only may parents find the topic of pornography difficult to address, but they also may be asked to address it based from a medium in which they may have limited knowledge and skill. Thus, for some, it may be easier to avoid the topic altogether.

Theoretical Framework: Integrating the Theory of Normative Social Behavior

Challenges presented in the pornography, sexual, and technology communication literature offer a variety of insights as well as obstacles in exploring parent-child pornography communication. Some parents may find parent-child pornography communication a seemingly double-edged sword: As represented by the sexual and technology communication literature, addressing sexual topics may be daunting, embarrassing, uncomfortable, and awkward, and emotional responses may be heightened if parents are further asked to talk about a technological medium that they hold limited knowledge and skill in. Yet, Wolack, Mitchell, and Finkelhor (2007) summarize, "Frank, direct conversations with youth that address the possible influences of pornography on sexual behavior, attitudes about sex, and relationships are needed" (p. 255). Parallel to this statement, Byrne and Lee's (2011) findings relating to open communication patterns

and increased acceptance among adolescents of parental internet risk prevention strategies present potentially influential implications relating to parents' roles in discussing pornography with their children.

In light of these claims and the limited research on parent-child pornography communication, present explorations need to create a baseline for deeper explorations. Consequently, the following examination aims to provide groundwork for future studies by investigating parental perceptions of societal norms associated with parent-child pornography communication. Several studies suggest that societal norms often act as influential factors in both conceptualizing and responding to a given phenomenon (Rimal & Real, 2003, Rimal & Real, 2005; Bute & Jensen, 2010). Accordingly, it was my intention to investigate parental beliefs on the societal norms of pornography, including the roles parents play in addressing pornography with adolescents. In doing so, I integrate the theory of normative social behavior (TNSB) as a lens to examine perceptions of normative parent-child pornography communication interactions. Moreover, as pornography is often considered a sensitive topic, approaching parent-child pornography communication through a societal lens will be helpful in prompting somewhat of a distance between the topic and participant. The following section outlines the TNSB, including its central claims and components.

Outlining the TNSB and Its Central Components

Norms are a central component of everyday existence. Rimal and Real (2003) state that norms serve as "codes of conduct that either prescribe or proscribe behaviors" (p. 185). Norms shape our beliefs and attitudes towards a certain subject, our approaches

to specific situations or contexts, and also influence our choices, actions, and behavioral selections. The study of norms, consequently, becomes important in attaining a more complex understanding of how various types of norms (e.g., societal norms, cultural norms, familial norms, etc.) extend themselves to any given phenomena. Therefore, the TNSB serves as a theoretical lens to describe and predict the effects of social norms on behavioral outcomes (Rimal & Real, 2005). Foundational to the theory is the idea that social norms are frequently developed through interpersonal communication; thus, the theory conceptualizes "social norms as a function of communication about behavior, among a group of people, in a particular context" (Lapinski, Anderson, Shugart, & Todd, 2014, p. 220; Lapinksi & Rimal, 2005). Subsequently, focus in the TNSB remains heavily on *the perceptions* of behavior rather than the behavior itself.

Central to the TNSB is the development of and distinction between descriptive and injunctive norms. Derived from an articulation of norms by Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren (1990), Rimal and Real (2005) argue that *descriptive norms* "refer to individuals' beliefs about the prevalence of a behavior" (p. 390). For instance, if an individual perceives an act as acceptable on a societal level, the likelihood that this individual is to construe this behavior as normative and potentially follow suit increases (Perkins, 1986; Perkins, Meilman, Leichliter, Cashin, & Presley, 1999). Moreover, *injunctive norms* "refer to the extent to which individuals perceive that influential others expect them to behave in a certain way" (Rimal & Real, 2005, p. 390). Rimal and Real (2005) go on to suggest that with injunctive norms, social sanctions are incurred if the perceived desired behavior is not performed. The interplay between descriptive norms and injunctive norms can be powerful. Rimal (2008) argues that if both descriptive and

injunctive norms align, the potential influence on behavior increases. Similarly, if descriptive and injunctive norms are antagonistic, their effect is likely to be minimized (Bute & Jensen, 2010).

Similar to the alignment or misalignment of norms, the TNSB also takes into account the degree of influence various types of norms have on a certain population. Descriptive norms, for instance, remain at the core of the TNSB model and, subsequently, hold the most influence on behavior. Consequently, Rimal and Real (2005) argue that injunctive norms serve as moderators or "underlying cognitive mechanisms" that can influence the effect of the descriptive norm's influence on behavior (p. 391). Other such moderators that can either enhance or detract from the influencing power of descriptive norms include outcome expectations, group identity, and behavioral identity. Referring to *outcome expectations*, Bute and Jensen explain "people's sense that if they behave in an expected way, they will experience benefits" (p. 683). Conversely, if people do not behave in a certain way, they will miss out on socialization experiences and opportunities (Rimal, Lapinski, Cook, & Real, 2005).

In addition to injunctive norms and outcome expectations, Lapinski and Rimal (2005) posit other moderating variables to descriptive norms, such as *group identity* (or the groups a person highly identifies with that may be influential in influencing belief about a given topic) and *ego involvement* or *behavioral identity* (or the relationship between one's behavior and the identification of this behavior to self-perception). For instance, one might be heavily influenced by a religious group in regards to a certain behavior (e.g., group identity) and, consequently, hold a strong perception of oneself in achieving this behavior (e.g., behavioral identity) as it is tied positively to this group's

reinforcement. In later research, Bute and Jensen (2010) explain that the TNSB "depends on attempts to look closely at what members of specific groups and subgroups perceive as normative, how they learn about norms, and how they perceive norms as connected with behavior" (p. 683). Thus, the evaluation of norms deepens through the complexity of varying norm types—these norm types are interwoven into a variety of contexts and reinforced (both positively and negatively) by the groups and subgroups one engages with regularly.

Summary

The recent technological development of the internet provides a more accessible, sophisticated, anonymous, and affordable gateway for adolescents to access pornographic material. Subsequently, greater research exploring the effects of adolescents and pornography has emerged; much of this research postulates negative effects concerning adolescent/pornography consumption, although further research in this area is greatly needed to understand degrees of effect. For some, this increase in research has precipitated a rise in explorations regarding parents' roles in communicating with adolescents about pornography. Qualities such as conversational "openness" and the authoritative parenting style are identified as potentially influential in encouraging positive parent-child pornography communication. However, numerous obstacles emerge for parents, including ambiguity in perceptions and definitions of pornography, difficulties discussing sexual and/or technological subjects, parental skill-set to set up filters and access online resources, etc., and few studies currently exist that investigate parental roles in parent-child pornography communication. Consequently, using the

TNSB as a guiding lens, exploring societal perceptions of pornography and parent-child pornography communication may be helpful in providing a basis for future work related to the given phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS, DATA COLLECTION, AND ANALYSIS

Qualitative Research Methods and the Theory of Normative Social Behavior

Several scholars argue that repeated exposure to pornography can result in negative outcomes for adolescents (Flood, 2009; Manning, 2008; Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012). These implications should not be ignored; however, there is limited literature investigating how adolescents and parents communicate about pornography in a way that may prevent exposure (Byrne & Lee, 2011; Greenfield, 2004; Heidari, Kazemi, & Nikmanesh, 2012; Rasmussen, Ortiz, & White, 2015). The purpose of this study is to interrogate perceptions of societal norms associated with a preventative claim--the idea that parents need to address pornography with their children. This claim inherently goes beyond observable and experimental data; it encompasses a wide range of feelings, beliefs, motivations, and attitudes that are difficult to capture in quantitative research. Therefore, I turn to the qualitative research methods to examine this supposition.

Qualitative approaches originate in fields of sociology, phenomenology, and anthropology (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Jill Manning states, "[…] qualitative research is recommended in any field where the research objective is to

reveal the nature of peoples' experiences, understand an area in which little is known, or bring forth fresh perspectives in well-known areas of study" (Manning, 2006, p. 21). Within qualitative research, emphasis is placed on capturing meaning, process, and descriptive data rather than generating outcomes and numerical data (Merriam, 1988). Moreover, Reinharz (1992) explains that the qualitative approach "offers researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher" (p. 19).

Qualitative methods are not commonly used in examinations that incorporate the theory of normative social behavior (TNSB). Again, the TNSB serves as a theoretical lens to describe and predict the effects of social norms on behavioral outcomes; focus in the TNSB remains heavily on *perceptions* of behavior rather than the behavior itself. However, Bute and Jensen (2010) note that qualitative approaches may be more fitting for the TNSB investigations that examine sensitive, personal and/or complex issues. This insight resonates with foundational components of the theory—in that social norms are frequently developed through interpersonal communication, or "communication about behavior, among a group of people, in a particular context" (Lapinski, Anderson, Shugart, & Todd, 2014, p. 220).

Examining the TNSB norms through the use of qualitative methodologies is productive in investigating complex issues and related contexts. For instance, Bute and Jensen (2010) used qualitative, semistructured interviews in their examination of low-income women's perceptions of social norms regarding sexuality, pregnancy, and childbearing ideologies (N=30). Central to their investigation was the unearthing of participant' experiences and narratives—particularly as Bute and Jensen's research

purpose was to explore "how low-income women describe, learn about, and connect norms with behaviors regarding fertility and sexuality-related issues […]" (p. 683). Bute and Jensen identify two sources of injunctive norms concerning fertility and sexuality, including authoritative (norms communicated by doctors, parents, educators) and peer-orientated (norms communicated by surrounding peers). Subjects more frequently aligned their behavior with peer-oriented injunctive norms than authoritative injunctive messages. Moreover, Bute and Jensen note that when descriptive and injunctive were congruent, these norms influenced behavior more heavily.

The present exploration situates itself in a similar line of research to Bute and Jensen's (2010) use of qualitative methods, the TNSB, and the examination of a sensitive, complex topic. My research objective is to dig deeper into phenomena by asking follow-up, exploratory questions related to how parents perceive normative responses to parent-child pornography communication. I also aim to explore potential obstacles/challenges linked to articulated perceptions. Through the use of in-depth interviews, I seek to integrate personal experience, or gain entry to "to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 19). Such entry will work to address the following research questions as outlined in Chapter 1.

RQ_1: How do parents describe the descriptive norms surrounding parent-child pornography communication?

a. What are parental descriptive norms regarding the definition of pornography?
b. What are parental descriptive norms regarding pornography's impacts on adolescents?

c. What are the parental descriptive norms regarding parental roles in communicating with children about pornography?

RQ_2: How do parents describe the injunctive norms surrounding parent-child pornography communication?

Researcher Positionality

As the researcher serves as a central component to the data collection process within qualitative analysis, it is important to acknowledge personal biases that inherently play a role in the research process. Jill Manning (2006) suggests that "Acknowledging biases assists those in reading and interpreting data, as well as those who attempt to replicate the study by clarifying the context wherein the data were collected, as well as the lens through which it was viewed and interpreted" (p. 37). Thus, reflecting upon these biases is helpful not only for future investigations, but also in creating reflexivity for my work and personal perspectives.

Personal Background and Education

I was born in Utah, although my family moved when I was very young to several other states. Pre K-elementary school included six different schools in various parts of the country. These moves encompassed new beginnings and learning to transition; consequently, as a young child, I quickly learned how to adapt to change and developed an enjoyment towards meeting new people.

I was raised and am a practicing member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon). Although my childhood was filled with change, I found

consistency in my religious affiliation. This participation also influenced my outlook towards media content and potential influences on families. My parents were proactive in promoting uplifting and positive media content throughout my youth. They also held open-discussions with our family regarding media and other topics. These interactions influenced my views in terms of interpersonal relationships and the power of positive family communication.

I thoroughly enjoyed theater as an adolescent and performed in numerous theatrical productions. I maintained my passion for the arts and pursued a Bachelor of Science in theater and speech education/English minor. After completing my degree, I began teaching high school theater, English, film, and public speaking courses and delighted in helping youth to build confidence within themselves. I also worked as a youth counselor for several religious and outdoor camps during the summer months. These and other experiences provided the foundation for my desire to assist young people with the problems they encounter and work to construct positive solutions to help adolescents become their best selves.

I went on to obtain a Master's Degree in Mass Communications. During this time, I became interested in the effect of media content and adolescent audiences. My master's thesis was on portrayals of the elderly in children's picture books. I integrated theoretical perspectives such as Bandura's social learning theory and Gerbner's cultivation analysis to explore how repeated content in media can influence youth. I also conducted a comparative analysis study where children drew pictures of an elderly person in real life and an elderly person from the media. These investigations sparked and deepened my curiosity towards media's impact on adolescents and how exposure to

repeated content can influence perceptions and actions towards a given phenomenon.

Teaching Experiences in Secondary Education

Throughout my years of graduate educational pursuits, I continued to teach in public education. I taught both middle school and high school courses in English, theatre, film, and communications. My teaching experiences provided numerous opportunities to observe adolescent interaction and engagement with technology. I have witnessed Prensky's (2001) notion that "today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (p. 1), where the graphic is preferred before the text, and multitasking skills are often used to receive and process information faster than previous generations. Understanding this transition in knowledge acquisition is key for me as an instructor. My approach to education has become more visual, technology-oriented, question-centered, and hands-on. Moreover, this approach is useful not only for classroom instruction, but also in my efforts to foster students' abilities to analyze and assess the mass messages that many are exposed to on a daily basis.

Working in secondary education provided me opportunities to participate in prevalent areas of new media research. To elaborate, many of my doctoral research papers and projects stem from witnessing acts of cyber-bullying, interacting with individuals who struggle with body image and eating disorders, children coming into contact with pornography in a school setting, and even discussing with parents ways to arm children with protective tools to combat pervasive media messages. I have experienced first-hand how media can influence individual perception, both positively and negatively. These experiences instilled in me a desire to promote positive messages

regarding media literacy, family communication, and other enriching communication in working to combat some of the more prevalent media issues adolescents encounter.

Case Study Approach

In establishing exploratory parameters, I examine three specific cases to produce a cross-case analysis. Robert Yin (2003) and Baxter and Jack (2008) propose that a case study approach can be useful in understanding the "how" and "why" questions associated with a phenomenon. Robert Stake's (1995) conceptualization of case studies provides greater detail to investigating contextually bound "how's" and "why's" through qualitative approaches. Stake argues that case studies are "holistic," "empirical," "interpretive," and "emphatic." The quality of *holistic* details the interrelationship between context and phenomenon. *Empirical* suggests the integration of researcher observations of the field to case analysis. *Interpretive* connects the investigation as a research-subject interaction as researchers use their own intuition as part of the case analysis. Finally, *empathic* incorporates reflection from the research through an emic perspective to prompt vicarious connection to case participants.

Yin (2009) describes five attributes of an effective case study design: (1) research questions; (2) purpose or propositions of study; (3) unit analysis; (4) logic that links data to the purpose; and (5) criteria to interpret data. In regards to Yin's first attribute research question, the incorporation of the TNSB as a theoretical lens directs my research questions to investigate descriptive and injunctive norms within a certain case or context. Accordingly, I will inquire as to the way parents describe descriptive norms relating to definitions of pornography, pornography and adolescents, as well as parental roles in

parent-child pornography communication. I also will ask questions related to parental injunctive norms of parent-child pornography communication, specifically addressing what others suggest parents "ought to do" in discussing pornography with adolescents.

The second characteristic of an effective case study is to articulate a clear purpose for the study. This characteristic often reflects the problem or purpose statement highlighted in the introduction. My purpose in this case study analysis is to explore both descriptive norms and injunctive norms among "cases," or groups of parents that held varying levels of connection to parent-child pornography communication education.

Yin (2009) identifies the third component of a case study as the unit of analysis, or the area of focus that is assessed; the unit of analysis should appropriately coordinate to the study's research questions and purpose. Consequently, this investigation's unit of analysis includes three cases of parents. The first case involves a group of parents connected to an antipornography organization. The second case involves parents in a school district where an internet safety intervention was taking place. The final case involves parents in a school district where there was not a formal antipornography organization/prevention program. More information on each of these cases is included in the "Participants" section.

Linking data to the purpose or general propositions of the study is the fourth component of case study analysis. This step is typically executed after the data collection phase. Through data analysis, the interpreter works to correlate meaning to theoretical propositions; this component often evolves through the identification and interpretation of emergent patterns and themes.

Yin (2009) suggests that the fifth characteristic of case study analysis is

establishing criteria that act as tools to interpret findings. These criteria emerge through the implementation of coding used to generate developing themes. Accordingly, at the conclusion of coding all data, I will use emergent themes to extract meaning. Although this meaning is not generalizable to the larger population due to limitations within case study analysis, it will be useful in offering recommendations to parents, antipornography organizations, health practitioners, and so forth, and will provide a basis for future research in the parent-child pornography research area.

Participants

This exploration seeks to investigate parental perceptions of societal norms concerning parent-child pornography communication. Three case studies or groups of mothers and fathers associated with varying levels of antipornography educational organizations will be integrated, including parents who hold a connection to the Utah Coalition Against Pornography, parents who have children who attend a school district that is currently making efforts to educate parents regarding internet-driven challenges among adolescents, and parents who have children who attend a school district that is not currently making efforts to educate parents concerning internet-driven challenges. The following provides a brief description of each of these selected populations. Table 1.1 summarizes demographic data for each case study.

Table 1.1 Demographic Profiles: Categorical Variables among Cases

Case #1: Parental Participants associated with the Utah Coalition Against Pornography

Variable	Number of Participants	% of Case Sample
Total Participants	14	100%
Biological Sex		
Male	4	28%
Female	10	72%
Age		
30-39	4	28%
40-49	9	65%
50-64	1	7%
Ethnicity		
White, Non-Hispanic	14	100%
Participant Education		
Some college credit—no degree	3	21%
College graduate	9	65%
Postgraduate degree	2	14%
Participant Spouse Education		
Some college credit—no degree	1	7%
Trade/technical/vocational training	1	7%
College graduate	7	50%
Postgraduate degree	5	36%
Religious Affiliation		
Christian	1	7%
Mormon	13	93%
Annual Family Household Income		
$60,000 to $79,999	2	14%
$80,000 to $99,999	2	14%
$100,000 to $149,999	6	43%
$150,000 or more	4	29%
Marital Status		
Now married	14	100%

Table 1.1 Continued

Case #2: A School District with a Media Intervention Parent Program

Variable	Number of Participants	% of Case Sample
Total Participants	10	100%
Biological Sex		
Male	2	20%
Female	8	80%
Age		
30-39	3	30%
40-49	5	50%
50-64	2	20%
Ethnicity		
White, Non-Hispanic	10	100%
Participant Education		
Some college credit—no degree	1	10%
College graduate	5	50%
Postgraduate degree	4	40%
Participant Spouse Education		
Trade/technical/vocational training	2	20%
College graduate	5	50%
Postgraduate degree	2	20%
Religious Affiliation		
Agnostic	2	20%
Atheist	2	20%
Buddhist	1	10%
Christian	1	10%
Mormon	2	20%
None	2	20%
Annual Family Household Income		
$40,000 to $59,000	1	10%
$60,000 to $79,999	3	30%
$100,000 to $149,999	6	60%

Table 1.1 Continued

Variable	Number of Participants	% of Case Sample
Marital Status		
Now married	9	90%
Divorced	1	10%

Case #3: A School District without a Media Intervention Parent Program

Variable	Number of Participants	% of Case Sample
Total Participants	9	100%
Biological Sex		
Male	3	28%
Female	6	72%
Age		
30-39	5	56%
40-49	1	11%
50-64	3	33%
Ethnicity		
White, Non-Hispanic	9	100%
Participant Education		
Some college credit—no degree	3	33%
Trade/technical/vocational training	1	11%
College graduate	3	33%
Postgraduate degree	2	23%
Participant Spouse Education		
College graduate	5	56%
Postgraduate degree	2	22%
Religious Affiliation		
Christian	7	78%
Mormon	1	11%
None	1	11%

Table 1.1 Continued

Variable	Number of Participants	% of Case Sample
Annual Family Household Income		
$20,000 to 39,999	1	11%
$40,000 to 59,999	1	11%
$60,000 to $79,999	1	11%
$100,000 to $149,999	6	67%
Marital Status		
Now married	7	78%
Divorced	2	22%

Case #1: Parental Participants Associated With the Utah Coalition Against Pornography

The Utah Coalition Against Pornography (UCAP) is a nonprofit, antipornography organization located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Members of the UCAP board include licensed health practitioners, researchers, directors of antipornography programs and movements, as well as religious affiliates from Catholic, Presbyterian, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) organizations. The Utah Coalition Against Pornography proclaims a mission statement of "empowering individuals, strengthening families, uniting organizations in the fight against pornography through education and collaboration" (utahcoalition.org). The organization holds two antipornography conferences annually—one in Salt Lake City, Utah and the second in St. George, Utah. These conferences are open to the public. Conferences feature a variety of professionals who present on educational topics dealing with pornography addiction, recovery, and family pornography communication and prevention. Using a list derived from conference attendance and other advertisements, UCAP also sends out monthly newsletters to interested parents and community members. The list holds more than 3000 names. Newsletters include relevant research findings and events associated with UCAP and other antipornography organizations.

Parents associated with UCAP often self-select to participant with the organization. UCAP parents are against pornography, frequently to the degree where they are seeking further education and resources in promoting antipornography messages in educational and family settings. Although demographic information for individuals involved with UCAP is not available, the integration of this case provides insight from

parents who are familiar and perhaps educated with societal pornography issues and pornography's influence on adolescents. Thus, parents from UCAP held varying perspectives regarding the urgency of parent-child pornography communication in comparison to those not formally linked to a specific antipornography organization.

Case #2: A School District With a Media Intervention Parent Program

My second case includes parents from a school district where an internet protection program is in place. This district is located in the state of Utah and encompasses a total student population of 67,602. The school district reports the student racial background of its 2012-2013 enrollment as 55.6 % White; 31.2 % Hispanic; 4.3 % Asian; 3.7 % Pacific Islander; 3 % African American; and 1.5 % American Indian. In terms of demographics for the community, this school district encompasses a total population of 460,375 with a 50.2 % female population and a 49.8 % male population. In terms of education within the general populace, community demographics report 13 % with graduate degrees, 23.9 % with bachelor's degrees, and 34.5 % with "some college." Occupational employment is primarily considered white collar (69.3 %), with the median household income at $56, 874. Total crime risk statistics are reported as "above national average" for this community (point2homes.com).

Over the last year, this district was featured in several local news stories for efforts educating parents regarding internet safety and related issues. News articles report that school leaders are not necessarily directing a certain action concerning these issues; rather, presentations focus on providing information to parents regarding the dangers of online interactions (including topics related to exposure to pornography,

cyberbullying, and suicide), as well as encouraging parents to converse with children on a more regular basis. Although the district has only provided a handful of meetings thus far, district efforts are becoming more popular within the community and more presentations are scheduled for future dates. The selection of this case offers variety to parental background/knowledge to the topic of pornography and prompts comparison to other parents heavily involved with internet safety organizations.

Case # 3: A School District Without a Media Intervention Parent Program

My third case incorporates parents from a school district that is not currently promoting parent education regarding internet safety and adolescents This school district is located in the state of Colorado and encompasses a total community population of 100,026. The school district's community demographics include the following information: 48.6 % male, 51.4% female; the median age of this population is 39 years old; the predominate race is Caucasian (86.8%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (9.7%), Asian (1.0%), African American (.4%), and American Indian and Alaska Native (1.0%). In terms of occupation, the top career type is "management, professional, and related occupations" (36.7%), followed by "sales and office occupations" (25.6%), "service occupations" (15.3%), "construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations" (11.1%), and "production, transportation, and material moving occupations" (10.9%). The median household income is $59,729. Total crime risk statistics are reported as "below national average" for this community (poximityone.com).

The aforementioned school district has not provided any type of district-sponsored information regarding internet safety and family pornography communication to the

community. This attribute will be helpful in obtaining perspectives from parents who may not have had opportunity to acquire education on adolescent exposure to pornography and related subjects. Furthermore, this district is also located outside the state of Utah and encompasses varying backgrounds in comparison to other cases. Including a more expansive population will be helpful in understanding influential groups and variables on a broader basis. Table 1 summarizes the demographic data for each case study.

Parents of Middle Schoolers

In prompting greater abilities to assess data, other TNSB examinations employed subjects that held specific commonalities amongst them. Bute and Jensen (2010), for instance, examined fertility-related expectations among low-income women (N=30) via telephone interviews. Moreover, Lapinski, Anderson, Shugart, and Todd (2013) surveyed childcare workers from 21 centers within a 40-mile radius to investigate normative influences surrounding hand washing behaviors. In searching for similarities among potentially broad parent population samples, I will narrow my sample based upon a few considerations. One consideration involves the adolescent's age. Adolescent development literature suggests that the topics discussed with children frequently differ depending upon the age of children (Kolucki & Lemish, 2011). Consequently, perceptions of societal norms surrounding parent-child pornography communication may differ from parents with children of elementary, middle, and high school age. Thus, the factor of age was taken into consideration in the design of this study. In narrowing in on age groups, one useful insight is that children's first exposure to pornography frequently

occurs around age 11 (Ropelto, 2007). I therefore select to interview parents with middle-school-aged children (grades 6-9, ages 11-14). As this age range may be considered an exceptionally influential period for parents to address pornography with children, obtaining greater understanding of how parents conceptualize related societal norms may be helpful in accordance to offering interventional recommendations.

Recruitment and Data Collection Procedures

After receiving IRB approval, I contacted a representative from each case site and asked for recruitment assistance. For the UCAP participants, the Executive Director of the Utah Coalition Against Pornography sent out two mass emails to the coalition's parent email list that explained the purpose of the study, qualifications for participation (e.g., parent of at least one middle-school aged child), and the interview protocol. I used a similar recruitment strategy for both of the described school districts. However, as opposed to contacting an individual who is employed by the district, I networked with PTA presidents of each district to locate participants. I also used the snowball effect (Morgan, 2008) to locate additional participants.

I conducted all interviews by telephone for a few reasons. First, some scholars report that the use of the telephone can provide "a face-saving medium," specifically when participants are asked to address a topic that may be considered sensitive in nature (Bute & Jensen, 2010; Reymert & Hunskarr, 1994). Second, telephone interviews allowed me to reach a broader range of participants. Specifically, as I involved a group of parents outside the state of Utah, this attribute was helpful in acquiring a more diverse sample. Furthermore, telephone interviews encouraged greater degrees of convenience—

particularly in reflection of a parent-based population sample. Bute and Jensen (2010) point to factors such as easing the burden of mothers trying to find childcare, transportation to the interview, and allowance for flexibility of time and location as benefits of conducting telephone interviews. Such factors proved helpful when considering the obstacles parents faced that could deter them from participation.

Polkinhorne (1989) recommends anywhere from 5 to 25 interview participants within in-depth interviewing qualitative research. For this examination, I interviewed a total of 33 parents (approximately 10 interviewees per case), or until saturation was reached. This sample number was derived from a previous pilot study that was similar in design, as well as Bute and Jensen's (2010) comparable piece on fertility norms. Interviews lasted approximately 35 to 90 minutes each. This interview time followed Bute and Jensen's comparable piece on fertility norms.

Each participant received an IRB approved Consent to Participate form prior to the interview. This document included a research purpose statement, a description of how the data were collected, any risks involved with the study, and also prompted the participant to ask questions. Immediately before the telephone interview, I reviewed the disclosure information and stressed interviewees' anonymity and comfort level. Participants were also informed that if at any point during the interview they wished to skip a question, they were encouraged to do so. Then, with their consent, I began the interview.

I used a semistructured interview questionnaire (see Appendix A) to guide the interview, although follow-up and additional questions were integrated as needed. The interview guide included questions designed to investigate (a) perceptions of societal

definitions and norms about pornography, (b) emotions associated with pornography, (c) interpersonal interactions with family members regarding parent-child communication about pornography, (d) interpersonal interactions with external familial groups that addressed parent-child pornography communication, (e) outcomes/emotions associated with talking to children about pornography and, (f) interventions/advice when discussing pornography with children.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was conducted through a systematic coding process (Saldana, 2009) followed by a cross-case synthesis analysis (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). With participants' consent, all interviews were first recorded and transcribed. After transcribing all interviews and rereading through transcripts to ensure accuracy, I underwent an open-coding or First Cycle coding process (Saldana, 2009). First Cycle coding involves staying "open" or allowing various types of codes to emerge without being tied to any specific pattern or theme; accordingly, in vivo, descriptive, emotion and versus codes were useful in this process (Saldana, 2009).

With the completion of the open coding cycle coding, I entered a second stage of analysis, a case by case analysis to cross-case synthesis. The purpose of this second-stage analysis is to examine more deeply relationships, patterns, and themes in efforts to unearth similarities and differences among various cases. Yin (2003) proposes the creation of a word table, or as Creswell (2007) describes, a means to "display the data from individual cases according to some uniform framework" (p. 163). Several versions of data display tables were created, organized, and reorganized to promote deeper levels

of analysis, and are described below. Furthermore, throughout this analysis, I constructed several analytic memos about my coding and shared these ideas with other colleagues to gain greater perspective on emergent ideas.

A data display table was first erected for each case. I then categorized codes by either descriptive (e.g., participant perceptions of what most people think/do) or injunctive norms (e.g., participant perceptions of what those close to them think they ought to do) and inserted codes into correlating categories/subcategories. General categories for display tables were derived from RQ_1 and RQ_2 and structured through the use of the theory of normative of behavior. These categories included general descriptive norms, descriptive norms concerning the definition of pornography, descriptive norms discussing pornography and adolescents, descriptive norms regarding parental roles in parent-child pornography communication, and general injunctive norms (see Appendix B).

Categorical codes were then grouped, resituated, and further subcategorized to explore possible dimensional meanings. For instance, the word "fear" was commonly used by participants to articulate most parents' response to the thought of talking with children about pornography. The code "fear" was first displayed under "descriptive norms regarding parental roles in parent-child pornography communication." However, the reasoning and outcomes associated with the word "fear" often differed from participant to participant and across cases. Thus, subcategories of the code "fear" were included within the corresponding initial data display matrix—and subsequently further untangled within the structure of "descriptive norms" to explore possible relations to other coinciding descriptive and injunctive norm articulations.

I also ran frequencies on codes within each category (see Appendix C). Frequency analysis was useful in fleshing out commonly used words/phrases and prompted the emergence of patterns, themes, and comparative case analysis. Emergent patterns unearthed ideas related to articulated definitions of pornography, emotional responses to pornography, and both descriptive and injunctive norms associated with parents addressing pornography with children, and are discussed extensively in Chapter 4.

Creswell (2007) asserts that one potential outcome of a visual framework is to unearth similarities and differences among various cases. This process moves the researcher towards uncovering *naturalistic generalizations*, or generalizations that are insightful to either the participants involved in the case or to applicable audiences. Accordingly, data within each case display table were transferred to a summative cross-case display table and then analyzed through procedures comparable to the original case-by-case analysis. A summative table was useful in exploring meanings of dimensional codes on a broader spectrum, as well as comparing frequencies of responses across cases. Uncovered cross-case naturalistic generalizations are explored in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Results from this investigation are presented by case study. Within each case I will first describe observed descriptive norms followed by outlining observed injunctive norms. Based on RQ_1, descriptive norms (i.e., what participants perceived most people do/think others do) were grouped into specific subcategories, including descriptive norms related to the definition/emotional responses to the word pornography, descriptive norms related to parental perceptions of pornography exposure among adolescents, and descriptive norms related to parental roles/responses in addressing pornography with adolescents. RQ_2 explored articulated injunctive norms (i.e., the beliefs that those close to individuals think they "ought" to do) and were categorized by external individuals/groups that participants identified as sharing influential messages about parent-child pornography communication. As of note, names of participants and school districts were altered to protect confidentiality and support anonymity in the reporting of these results. The pseudonym of Mountain West School District (Mountain West) is used to refer to participants within the school district of Case #2. The pseudonym of Grand Lake School District (Grand Lake) is used to refer to participants within the school district of Case #3.

Case #1—UCAP: Parental Participants Associated With the Utah Coalition Against Pornography

Descriptive Norms

The first research question examined how parents perceived the descriptive norms surrounding parent-child pornography communication. In regards to descriptive norms and the definition of pornography, three categories emerged relating to how "most people define the word 'pornography'." The first, most prevalent category involved the type of content depicted. UCAP participants used descriptive phrases to describe illustrated content within pornography, such as "sexually explicit," "something that you watch that entails two people having physical contact, most likely sex or oral sex," "unclothed people," "nudity in a sense that is sexually explicit," online content with "scantily clad individuals" and content that includes "suggestive poses with revealing clothes on." Content descriptors were typically paired with a second category, or the medium by which pornography is accessed. UCAP participants integrated mediums such as "movies," "pictures," "videos," "print or visual," "online pictures," and "advertisements" into their perceptions of how most people define pornography. About half the participants conveyed the medium of access before indicating the type of content illustrated; thus, some participants placed more emphasis on the technology used to access porn rather than the content itself.

Other UCAP participants linked an audience to the word "pornography." For instance, Jennifer mentioned that pornography "involves adults," and that most people do not typically connect pornography with children or child pornography. Jennifer further described people often experiencing a "visceral" response to the word pornography, or

that the word itself is "connected to experience." Similarly, Rebecca exemplified this notion in her perception, suggesting that most people define pornography as "bad" and associate, "people don't want to deal with it" when they hear the word, "pornography." Rebecca went on to explain that most people connect the word pornography to people who "are addicted to it, have a problem, and are not good people." These observations suggest a descriptive norm where parents may construct mental connections and feelings to a specific group and/or personal previous experiences when hearing the word "pornography."

As a follow-up question to pornography's definition, participants were asked, "What emotion do most people connect to the word 'pornography'?" The purpose of this question was to prompt further description to the connotation and/or feelings that most people associate with pornography. UCAP participants expressed a wide range of perceptions, encompassing both positive and negative emotions. Feelings ranged from "embarrassment," "avoidance," "shame," "a sense of forbidden," and "uncomfortable" to "intrigued," "educational," and "interested." Jennifer, for instance, commented on her observations regarding the various emotions she perceives from other parents in working with an antipornography organization. She states:

> Jennifer: I see different reactions.
>
> Interviewer: Please tell me about them.
>
> Jennifer: I see embarrassment. I see guilt. I see… depends on… people avoid eye contact. And so that what makes me think that they're experiencing shame or embarrassment. And then depending on their continued response… if they continue to ramble about it and then I think… they start looking… if you just even say the word "pornography," everybody has all different kinds of reactions—guilt, shame, embarrassment. And they start thinking about their own experiences with pornography. You just say the word, and they think about their own experience. Positive, negative, embarrassing, guilty.

Jennifer reiterates what others expressed when discussing the definition of pornography—that the word "pornography" is frequently linked to previous personal experiences. One emergent descriptive norm suggests that the pornography is conceptualized as difficult and convoluted as an array of variables and emotions are brought to the forefront. Moreover, emotions tied to the word are sometimes coated with underlining complexities. Tom, for example, communicates the layers of the contexts associated with his answer of the emotion, "fear."

> Interviewer: The next question, what emotion do most people connect to the word "pornography"?
>
> Tom: (Laughing) … Gosh… I mean you're talking to somebody who's probably… gosh, you know the first thing… I'll just tell you the first one that came to mind. Fear.
>
> Interviewer: Fear. Okay.
>
> Tom: Fear. Yeah, let me think. I think it's associated with a choice that would be morally bad. You know, so, "I don't want to be in that category. I'm fearing that I'll be a bad person." And, I think people… if they're really honest with themselves, they might realize, "Oh I have a little fear associated with it that I might get sucked in because I… I know some good people that have lost family and jobs and they're good people. They just got sucked into an addiction. I fear getting addicted. If I do want… if I do go out and seek for more, I fear that the isolation that that could bring to me, because I'm certainly not going to want to ask my wife for some help and support." You know, "I would feel, like I had… you know, not been faithful to her, or whatever…" There's shame involved. Yeah, I would say fear and shame.
>
> Interviewer: Okay, shame and fear. It sounds like this fear is fairly complex on multiple different levels from what you're describing.
>
> Tom: Yeah.
>
> Interviewer: Do you have any thoughts as to why people connect with it in a different manner…this "fear"?
>
> Tom: Yeah… well, I would say… I would just say that… I don't know that, well, yeah… okay. I'm clarifying a little bit right now. I would say in answer to that, "Why do people connect to it on these different levels of fear?" It's fairly

> complex. To me, it goes right back to the accessibility of pornography to today. It used to be that you really had to work hard to get your hands on it. It had to be at a friend's house or, you know, their dad was at work but he knew where his magazine stash was. Or you had the guts to go to that part of the bookstore and pick one off the shelf and look through it or whatever. I mean anybody with a smartphone device can get it. And so, yeah, I think that… that maybe we don't know how well to react to it… realizing that it's not a question of, "If I'll come in contact, but when, and what will it do. What will it do to me"? You know, it can happen… well it does happen to people totally unsolicited. So I think there's a little bit of an element of fear there. Gosh, "Something that I really don't want could be placed right in front of me and I did not choose to put it there." And it could have a lasting effect.
>
> Interviewer: It sounds like the increased amount of exposure that you're talking about has kind of… in some ways increased the levels and different types of fears? Am I understanding that correctly?
>
> Tom: Yeah, I would say so. I mean I think we're coming along with helping to teach our kids and ourselves about what to do. But, yeah, certainly a lot more's required in that way of getting ready for what would happen in the event that you do encounter it.

Tom encompasses aspects such as coming into contact with pornography, the impact pornography has on individuals, feelings attributed to increased accessibility, and "unsolicited" exposure to construct the emotional context of "fear." As illustrated in this dialogue, the context of "fear" roots itself in a multilayering of thoughts, outcomes, variables, and circumstances that may drive the concept of pornography as a vast and complicated topic.

Other UCAP participants perceived that some conceptualize pornography in a positive light and, at times, these viewpoints may differ, depending on audience and context. For example, Landon differentiated between emotional responses of males and females—describing this division as a "50/50 split." He proposed that whereas females conceptualize pornography as "fearful" and "disgusting," males are "interested." Another participant divided emotional responses by age. Tammie states:

> Tammie: So I would guess that most people at the age of 60 associate the word pornography with maybe the word "dirty," "shame" … let me think. Yeah, those are the two words that stand out. And even… I would guess even men who are over 60 who enjoy it would concur with that. While I think younger people… I'm a college student, again, right now. My oldest daughter is in college, too, so we go to the same college. So I've seen firsthand that a lot of young people don't necessarily have that view. They might look at it as… certainly they are aware of the traditional view of pornography… more traditional view. But I think many of them see it as a tool to be carefully applied for the purpose of a healthy outlet. A healthy sexual outlet. Or as a tool to, what's the word… enrich a couple's sexual experience. Maybe not even just people in college. I'm thinking of people, you know, in their 30s even 40s that would have that same opinion. And so I think that the context is definitely changing… okay, that's another topic. (Laughing) I'm getting off topic.

Tammie argues that conceptualizations of the word "pornography" varies depending on age. For older generations, the word "pornography" may elicit feelings of "dirty" and "shame" whereas younger generations may view pornography with a more positive emotional tone. As Tammie perceives, pornography can be used by young people as a tool for a "healthy sexual outlet." Consequently, Jennifer, Tom, Landon, and Tammie's perceptions point to a descriptive norm that suggests that the word "pornography" can elicit a variety of responses and emotions that may differ depending on age, biological sex, personal background, and so forth. Consideration of such a range in varying responses may be useful when discussing pornography with others.

A second category of descriptive norms relates to parental perceptions of adolescents and pornography. The majority of UCAP participants perceived that most parents assume a more relaxed stance in terms of adolescents coming into contact with pornography. Several participants utilized phrases that illustrate parents downplaying the impact of pornography on adolescents. For instance, a few participants commented, "boys will be boys" when describing normative actions related to parental beliefs of

pornography and adolescents. Similar participant perceptions suggested that, as a whole, young people are more accepting of pornography, adolescent exposure to pornography is inevitable, most parents are not concerned about this exposure, and that adolescents use pornography as a sexual education tool and/or stimulant. Although it was evident that all participants were antipornography through their association with an antipornography organization, UCAP participants conveyed a descriptive norm that argues the normalization of adolescents encountering pornography, from a societal perspective.

Another expressed descriptive norm relating to pornography and adolescents illuminated a dichotomy between the acceptance that most adolescents encounter pornography, but "good kids" are not exposed, or "exposure to pornography does happen, but not with my child." Some participants articulated the perception that parents often construct attitudinal barriers to the possibility that children encounter pornography within a parent's own home. Adam describes this barrier in more detail:

> Interviewer: What do most people believe about adolescents and pornography?
>
> Adam: I think there's a general consensus that kids are exposed much earlier, but I also believe that people naively think that most are [exposed] by some other family. And so while it's true that they see that it's more prevalent in society, I still think they… their perspectives on families are, "My kid's a good kid, and we… it's not in my home." So that's what I would say. And they may worry about it some at school and things like that, but from a home perspective, I think they naively think they're safer.
>
> Interviewer: At home specifically?
>
> Adam: Yeah, I would say at home specifically because it threats their home. They oftentimes… we've encouraged parents in general that the computer is in a place like a kitchen area or some sort of open area and passwords and things like that to help protect a child. I think in general, people… it gives them a false sense of security that, "oh no, they wouldn't do that." So that's what I think.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting, because those seem like two fairly contrasting beliefs—

> that pornography is more prevalent, but at the same time, "it's not impacting my child." Any thoughts as to why that might be?
>
> Adam: I think it's always easier to see the enemy outside than from within. From a general perspective, it's like a wolf in sheep's clothing. It's easier to… if you see a wolf's clothing and it's outside your domain, you're easily more on guard. Things like that. Whereas from within, you're not looking really for where the wolf is… that's what I would say… you're blind to it.

Adam conveys what he perceives to be parental naivety and blindness to adolescents coming into contact with pornography, particularly within the family's home. He suggests that distance is created between a parent's house and adolescents encountering pornography that distracts parents from seeing "the wolf in sheep's clothing" —or the threat of pornography within one's own household.

Another area of norms relates to parental roles in parent-child pornography communication. These descriptive norms centered on what most mothers do/believe, what most fathers do/believe, as well as parental responses concerning parent-child pornography communication. Although Tom perceived that most mothers do talk with children about pornography at an early age, the majority of UCAP parents expressed more negative perceptions. When asked, "What do most mothers do if they learn their children was exposed to pornography," participant responses ranged from, "mothers tend to freak out—especially in a conservative home" to most mothers often "sweep the issue under the rug" and avoid the situation altogether. Moreover, the bulk of participants perceived that most mothers do not talk with their children about pornography. If mothers do hold parent-child pornography conversations, these conversations often elicit negative outcomes from mothers, such as overreacting or sharing more "shame-based" messages. Anne, for instance, describes these types of messages in more detail:

> Interviewer: Can you talk a little more about the word "overreact"? I am

interested to know what you mean by that.

> Anne: Sure. What I mean by that… well, that's a good question. I think we see things as really black and white. Okay, I am going to speak, not from personal experiences, but from my own perception. "I would love to think that I would just be very calm about it and… and if my child reported that if it happened, or if it happened while we were together at the computer or anything like that… I'd love to think that I would be, oh, you know, 'What you just saw is called pornography' and explain to them that if it ever happens again… and, you know, 'hopefully it won't. Here's what you can do, you shut off the computer.' But I think, I don't know if it were to happen to… I think I might just… 'Ahhhh!' Feel like, 'Oh no, it just happened.' Like we just crossed a line. My 11-year-old boy was just exposed to pornography. What is it going to mean? And I might just tend to… maybe read too much into it. Jump in my mind from one instance of exposure to, "Is my child going to become a pornography addict?" What does… yeah. So, I mean, overreacting may just be my emotional state at the very moment." Just kind of a scream, a "Hurry, what can I do… what can I do to get this away?" Or if they were to tell me personally, an overreaction might be, "What were you looking at? Why did you… you know, how could that have come up? What were you searching for on the internet?" And maybe make them feel like they were responsible for what happened, when that probably is not the case.

Anne monologues her perception of the inner tensions some parents face in juggling between reaction and response to adolescent pornography exposure. Her articulation depicts varying emotions and feelings that encompass difficult thoughts and emotions to manage and address. Such responses may be help explain why some mothers avoid talking with children about pornography—essentially avoiding the possible roller-coaster of emotions that are often associated with the topic itself. Moreover, as Anne's words illustrate, some parents are concerned that parent-child pornography messages shared with adolescents may produce more harmful than helpful outcomes. The identification of shame-based messaging (or as Anne describes, making adolescents "feel like they were responsible for what happened when that probably is not the case") presents a derogative feeling to the conversation and can potentially stifle further discussion for adolescents. Thus, general descriptive norm patterns among UCAP participants suggest the perception that mother-child pornography communication is a rare and uncomfortable occurrence.

In addition to most mothers' responses, another descriptive norm involved how most fathers respond to adolescent pornography exposure. UCAP participants perceived that fathers were less likely to talk with children about pornography (specifically in comparison to mothers) and many illustrated fathers as being "less concerned" about adolescent exposure to pornography than mothers. Additionally, two participants asserted that most fathers view adolescent exposure to pornography as a "coming of age experience" for youth and, rather than addressing the harms of pornography consumption, most fathers advocate that adolescents should "keep pornography consumption private" and "away from females." This trend was frequently linked to the perception that fathers consume pornography more than females and maintained greater acceptance of pornography because of this consumption.

The final category of descriptive norms communicated by UCAP participants involved general perspectives regarding the act of parent-child pornography communication. Two interesting perceptions of normative patterns emerged: the first relates to perceptions of responses concerning the act of talking with adolescents about pornography. UCAP participants were asked to articulate an emotion(s) that most people connect with the thought of having a conversation about pornography with an adolescent. Again, the predominant response described was a sense of fear stemming from uncertainty. Landon, for example, articulates this fear:

> Interviewer: What emotion do most people pair with thinking about having a conversation with an adolescent about pornography?
>
> Landon: I think most people are fearful to do so.
>
> Interviewer: Why might that be?
>
> Landon: It's a… taboo topic in our culture. I think in general. Especially among

> parent-aged people. And I think they're afraid of what they might find out with their child if they were open about it. And I don't think they're well prepared for how the conversation might be initiated or might progress.

Originating from the perception that the topic of pornography is considered a "taboo" subject, Landon discusses the potential unpreparedness and uncertainty that parents may feel when thinking about discussing pornography with children: he suggests that most parents are "afraid of what they might find out" and unprepared to either initiate and/or progress the conversation.

Another participant perceived that fear often prompts parents to avoid discussing pornography and even discourages them from using the word "pornography" with adolescents. Janice, for example, poses possible questions that flow from a parent's mind when thinking about talking with children about pornography:

> Janice: You know, "Am I opening up a can of worms? Am I going to make my child more intrigued by this by talking about it? Do they want to go look at it?" So I think a lot of parents… they don't want to talk about it because of what their kids will do and go and seek out on their own. I would say fear.

Janice's reply points to a general perception that several other participants communicated as well—the thought that pornography education will encourage adolescents to become more curious about the topic and, accordingly, push them to want to seek pornography out on their own. Consequently, consistent with other perceptions of descriptive norms, the emotion of fear remains complex, multilayered, and linked to previous personal experiences.

Injunctive Norms

The second research question aimed to explore how parents describe the sources of injunctive norms (or what others expect a person "ought to do" in a given

circumstance) surrounding parent-child pornography communication. UCAP participants described two specific pattern that shared messages regarding parent-child pornography communication. One pattern reflected a "community of resources" interwoven by antipornography organizations, family, close friends, and/or religious associates. These sources often shared supporting messages that promoted pornography education and conversation. For instance, Janice suggests the following when asked what those close to her thought she should do if her child was exposed to pornography:

> Janice: Well, those close to me… I talk about it with so many people. Educate, educate, and educate them. And I'm sure you've heard this, but it's not a matter of if but a matter of when. So I feel like those around me, and myself included, would figure out that you need to get to them before they find it so you can teach them how to combat/edit and the steps to take of how to deal with it when they see it. They're going to see it no matter what. So we need to teach them what to do about it—to give them the tools to know how to handle it when they see it.
>
> Interviewer: Are those close to you sharing any messages about how to provide adolescents with tools?
>
> Janice: Well, I think, more or less, I'm sharing tools with them. But a lot of them are getting… I mean there's so many great organizations out there right now that I think are being talked about more. And there's a lot more out there especially for youth. And so I think as a community, when you've got a close-knit community… when you find something good, you want to share it with others. And so I think we're learning to… "Hey, I found this group for this kids that are having this problem right now." I think the word is starting to spread where our eyes are lot more open in what's going on in our society.

Janice highlights the power of sharing within a close-knit community. She articulates suggestions such as pornography education, empowering children with a plan for when they encounter pornography, and ideas related to increasing media literacy skills as influential messages from those around her.

Other participants shared similar messages as Janice that included tools/resources for parent-child pornography communication. When asked what others close to him

think he "ought to do" when a child encounters pornography, Tom states,

> Tom: I don't think it would be any different than the things I've mentioned before. You know, I think that the people close to me would also say, "Yeah, try to have a good dialog and complement your child for, you know, talking about it." Now the question… "What would they say that I should do if my child was exposed?"
>
> Interviewer: Yes, what do those close to you think you ought to do?
>
> Tom: Okay. Address it in an open, nonthreatening manner. Be very clear with what your expectations are as far as the issue of pornography. And I think they would also say, "Make sure your children understand the why. Why is this not a good thing? Why should I avoid it?" And yes.
>
> Interviewer: Can you identify at all where those types of messages may be coming from? Is it from a particular friend or group of family members or parents? Any thoughts as to who might be sending those messages to your family?
>
> Tom: Oh geee… I mean, my extended on my side, my wife's side of the family. That would certainly be the message from them. And I can just think of our close friends that live in close proximity to us as well as my co-workers that I'm close to. I think if you went to any one of those groups of people and said, "I just found out that Nathan was exposed to pornography. What do you think I ought to, how should I approach that?" I think any of them would kind of say a little bit of everything I just told you.

Messages that reflect "open," "nonthreatening," and assisting adolescents to understand the "why" illustrate a distinct separation from perceptions of societal descriptive norms. UCAP participants shared injunctive messages frequently tied to connections that encourage open communication about pornography with adolescents in a more positive manner. Although some UCAP participants identified other sources that shared negative viewpoints of parent-child pornography communication, all participants identified at least one source that shared supporting parent-child pornography communication.

A second injunctive norm highlights the role that religiosity can play within parent-child pornography communication. Although not purposefully sought out by the

researcher, 13/14 UCAP participants identified themselves as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (i.e., LDS, Mormons). Consequently, when asked about shared messages from those around them concerning what they "ought to do regarding parent-child pornography communication," many participants articulated viewpoints/suggestions/resources originating from the LDS church, its leadership, and its general membership. UCAP participants suggested that as a religious organization, the LDS church teaches that consumption of pornography is morally, physically, and spiritually damaging, inappropriate, and is often associated with a "degeneration of society." Furthermore, specific to parent-child pornography communication, UCAP participants communicated that the LDS church encourages individuals to discuss the harms of pornography exposure openly and at a developmentally appropriate level with children. These messages were often viewed as shareable resources and provided hopeful support to parents. For example, Landon shares the following:

> Landon: I'm part of the Mormon culture and one of our magazines, the *Ensign*, last October said that roughly 90% of young boys by the age of 16 are regularly using internet pornography and that church numbers will be similar for our young men as well. So, that's another piece of evidence in my mind that… I think it said 90% of boys and 1/3rd of young girls. So that's evidence in my mind that pretty much all adolescents are exposed… probably almost all of the boys, and jumping right in and using it regularly.
>
> Interviewer: Did the article give any suggestions for parents?
>
> Landon: Yes, lots of suggestions.
>
> Interviewer: Do you remember anything that it said?
>
> Landon: Yeah, I mean I could go on and on about that: limiting and supervising internet use. Use of filters. The careful distribution of smart phones… because their personal devices that this exposure is usually on. Talking to them frequently. Making it a comfortable topic for them to discuss with you. I'm trying to… describe in non-explicit ways the appropriate sexual interactions, you know, in our culture it's between a husband and wife only. So that they have the

comparison to think about it instead of the promiscuity that's typically displayed.

Interviewer: And when you say, "our culture" what do you mean by that?

Landon: I meant Mormon culture.

Suggestions related to talking to children frequently, presenting pornography as an approachable and comfortable topic for adolescents, as well as supervision of internet are all messages Landon correlates to the LDS church. However, this association between religion and parent-child pornography communication was not the same among all UCAP participants; several participants made a clear distinction between antipornography messages shared by the LDS church versus LDS member responses towards others. For instance, Rebecca conveyed feelings of "judgement" from others if one's own children came into contact with pornography:

> Rebecca: But people on the outside, I think, are like, "Where did they get it? What kind of friends are they hanging around with? Is the mom at work? Is she not at home? Is the computer somewhere where they can't find it? Is it not in a public place? Why do they have internet on their cell phone?" They just judge. They just… you know, because their kids don't have a problem with it. […] I think it depends on your friend. Again with relationships, like if your friend is just like, "Oh my gosh." And they want to gossip behind your back, like "Oh my gosh, did you hear what so and so did?" Then, great. But then there's those other ones who are willing to listen, like, "What can I do?" Then you're seeking… you have to be as a parent seeking out their… you want them. You want their advice. I don't know. In Utah, I think people are very quick to judge in some areas.

Rebecca's thoughts illustrate variations in responses within LDS communities—with some members offering support and assistance and others conveying messages of judgement towards parents and families. Similarly, Janice also points to the differing responses she observes in her LDS community:

> Interviewer: If someone at your church was talking about parents communicating with children about pornography, what would they say you ought to do?

> Janice: It all just depends on the individual. Because I know many people in my ward who struggle with this. So they are very much advocates for talking about it with your kids. But I also know that they're people that are also addicts who don't want to talk about it and don't believe in necessarily being open and honest with kids. And they just want to sweep it under the rug and just pretend like it's the elephant in the room that doesn't exist.

Janice articulates individual experiences of pornography as an influencer to expressed responses she hears from others in her religious community concerning parent-child pornography communication. Again, these responses diverge from talking openly with children to avoidance and dis-acknowledgement that adolescent exposure to pornography is prevalent. Such conveyed injunctive norms resonate with earlier expressed descriptive norms concerning the definition of pornography, in that personal experience plays a significant role in the conceptualization of pornography and related feelings/actions.

Case #2—Mountain West: A School District With a Media Intervention Parent Program

Descriptive Norms

Descriptive norms were also observed in Case #2—Mountain West: a school district with a media intervention. Observed Mountain West descriptive norms were also subdivided into three categories: descriptive norms associated with the definition of pornography, descriptive norms concerning pornography's impact on adolescents, and descriptive norms concerning parental roles in communicating with children about pornography. In terms of definitions attributed to pornography, articulated perceptions of societal definitions of pornography integrated the following content: (1) the observed content of pornographic messages (e.g., "nudity," "sexually inappropriate images," "visual sexual acts"), (2) mediums used to either access or distribute pornography (e.g.,

magazines, picture form, print pornography, films, television, movies, and online), and (3) outcomes related to pornography (e.g., "exploitation of sex," "nudity that projects women in a negative light," "visual sexual acts and the actual abuse that occurs," "exploiting men or women and sexual content"). Mountain West participants did not associate a specific audience with pornography consumption (e.g., aimed towards adults and/or adolescents); rather, several Mountain West participants conceptualized pornography as an act of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation was described as the "projection of women in a negative light" or the "actual abuse that occurs" within the creation and distribution of pornography. Mountain West participants highlighted a more humanistic characteristic of pornography as many described not only the content produced, but also integrated negative societal outcomes within pornography's creation.

In addition to the three aforementioned definitional categories, two participants described possible definitional discrepancies in differentiating between pornography and art. For instance, Carol asserted that differences in definition relate to personal backgrounds and belief systems. She associated these variances with individuals who hold either a "conservative" or "liberal" perspective. Carol explained that conservative parents may define pornography as anything sexually inappropriate whereas liberal parents argue that erotica and other forms of art are not defined as pornography. Similar to Carol's observations, Jim also explicated differences within perceptions of the definition of pornography as they relate to the medium by which the content is portrayed. He describes the following when asked, "How do most people define the word "pornography?"

> Jim: Nudity. For the purposes of personal pleasure. Although, I guess strip clubs and that thing might not be pornography… it's different maybe. So it's in picture

> form. It's not… I don't think that people in society think of erotic art as pornography. And I am not sure where I stand on that. You know, like, art. I mean there is nude art and sculptures and that kind of thing for a long history. I don't know how people would view that. But, today's pornography… magazines, tons of publications of online explicit material.

Jim's words illustrate variance and possible discrepancies that emerge within identifying and defining pornography—even articulating his own inconclusive stance on erotic art as pornography. Combining Carol's and other Mountain West participant insights, one emergent descriptive norm suggests that the boundaries for what is and is not considered pornography are often blurred, complex, and varied among individuals.

The next interview question inquired about certain emotions most people connect to the word "pornography." Overall, the majority of expressed emotions by Mountain West participants were negative. Emotions such as "frightening," "anger," "silence," "fear," "feelings of judgement," and "avoidance" were among the prevalent emotions described. Furthermore, perceptions of societal emotions expressed by participants tended to differ, depending upon individual experiences. For instance, during the interview, Jim admitted to recently overcoming a pornography addiction, something he was very hesitant to discuss. When asked about the emotions most people associate with pornography, his response communicated a hesitancy in talking about pornography in general. He states:

> Jim: I think something very personal, right? And I think it's frightening to talk about, but we need to. Most kids… if you mention the word "pornography," the room just gets silent. Most people, I think, if they viewed any pornography, that's the last thing they want to talk about, and yet they know they need to.

In speaking more in-depth with Jim, it became apparent that even discussing the topic of pornography on a societal level was a subject considered "very personal." This personalization reinforced other emotional descriptors Jim used in articulating the idea of

talking about pornography with adolescents, such as “frightening,” and “feelings of judgment.” Yet, throughout Jim’s interview, there seemed to be an underlying driving force implying Jim’s determination that something needed to be done—“and yet they know they need to.” Interestingly in these statements, Jim’s projection of societal pornography norms appeared to be very much connected to his own feelings of hesitancy intertwined with individual experiences. This projection also aligned with his desire to assist others, as he had experienced first-hand the negative impacts of pornography.

Other participants also linked personal experience to emotions tied to pornography. Jake, for instance, perceived that pornography generates feelings of “pleasure” and/or “humor” if individuals actively seek pornography consumption. Another participant argued that external messages often present pornography as a central cause for ruining families and subsequently prompts individuals to associate pornography with feelings of “horror” and “fear.” Regarding pornography and adolescents, Kate suggested that emotions paired with pornography diverge depending upon whether audiences either inadvertently or intentionally encounter pornography:

> Kate: That depends on whether you’re talking about the people who are inadvertently exposed to it or the people who are intentionally exposed to it. Because I think that the people that are inadvertently exposed to it… I think usually the emotion that is attached to it is anger, or embarrassment, and the people that are intentionally exposing themselves to it, I think the emotion is more either guilt or pleasure or a combination of the two.
>
> Interviewer: So you mentioned inadvertently versus intentionally, how would society define those two groups?
>
> Kate: Well, those that are intentionally exposing themselves to it, you’re talking about adults who are legally able to access it. And assuming that they’re within the confines of the law, are accessing it legally. Or you’re talking about those that are inadvertently, in terms of children, spouses who happen upon internet porn that their spouse is enjoying, as it were, and they don’t necessarily know about it.

> More in the inadvertent, you are talking about children that are exposed to it in school situations. An unfortunate group.

Kate's description resonates with other patterns where a variety and even conflicting descriptive norms emerge within the same dialogue. Perceptions of normative actions to sensitive issues may contrast as these observations can be linked to personal experience and intention. Although descriptive norms aim to examine central patterns within perceptions of what most people do or think others do, such patterns may diverge amongst sensitive and/or morally complex issues in reflection of competing societal beliefs and actions.

Parental perceptions of adolescents and pornography was the second category of explored descriptive norms. Articulated perceptions among Mountain West participants revealed a 50/50 split in perceived descriptive norms. Half of Mountain West participants perceived that most parents know their adolescent would encounter pornography—even to the extent that adolescent exposure to pornography is a normalized event. Jim shares a personal experience that shapes his perspective of society's viewpoint on adolescents and pornography. When asked about what most people believe about adolescents and pornography, he provided the following narrative:

> Jim: I can't speak for everyone, but I think if I had to, I'd say that most people would say it's unhealthy. But not completely. My parents, when I was growing up, we had a lot of pornography in our house. We were moving beds one day, and there was a bed with the magazines in between the covers and my dad just laughed. He just thought it was funny. Another one was in a case of… we had a bathroom, with the kind of window that you can't see out. You think people can't see in. Well the magazine had been pushed against the window and we were at a neighbor's house. When we looked up one of the bathroom windows had Playboy or Penthouse in the window right. The humor about that makes you think that there is sort of an approval, a sort of, "well that's what boys do mostly." I don't know… girls do it to, but I don't know to what extent they do it. But that it's kind of okay, like it's just normal.

Jim's response displays contrast between the perception that most people believe adolescent exposure to pornography to be "unhealthy," yet the phrase "but not completely" transitions this perspective to an awareness that many adolescents come into contact with pornographic material and face a range of responses from adults. Differing adult reactions may be linked to a perception of "normalcy" of adolescent pornography exposure as adolescents perceive varying messages—from acceptance to disgust and anger—from adults regarding these experiences.

The second half of the group perceived that most people do not believe adolescents encounter pornography. Several participants in this second category explained that this perception often stems from observations of parental denial that exposure to pornography is an issue for adolescents. For example, two nonreligious participants correlated observations of parental denial by religious groups in the Utah area. When asked what most people believe about adolescents encountering pornography, Alice states the following:

> Alice: I think they are. I know for a fact that they are being exposed to it. I think personally as a parent… a lot of parents are in denial that their adolescent can actually see pornography.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting. What do you mean by denial?
>
> Alice: They don't believe that their child can go to school and see pornography at school. And they do. And they're in denial, that "Oh, there's no way that my son or daughter would ever see that or ever look at that." They're in complete denial that it would ever happen. But I know it does.
>
> Interviewer: That's really interesting. Where do you think this belief comes from?
>
> Alice: Partial, religion beliefs. Partial, they just don't want to believe that it's truly happening, that their kid would ever do that, would ever look at pornography. Like I said, they're in denial. But I know for a fact that they do. My daughter tells me that they do.

Similar to Alice's response, Julie shares a comparable viewpoint and provides a personal example of her perspective of descriptive societal norms:

> Interviewer: What do most people believe about adolescents and pornography?
>
> Julie: I believe that most people don't think that it does. But my perception would be that most adolescents are exposed to it in one way or another.
>
> Interviewer: Just to make sure I understand, so the people around you may not perceive that adolescents are not exposed, but your personal perception is that they actually are? Did I understand that correctly?
>
> Julie: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting. Have you found any sort of tensions with those differing beliefs?
>
> Julie: Yes. I have kind of a personal story. Someone that I work with, she had a son that went on a [n LDS] mission and he had to come home early because he was dealing with some personal issues, which she found out that he was addicted to pornography. And, her kind of, when she was kind of telling me what was going on or whatever, her words were, "I don't know where he saw that because it wouldn't have been in our house. And we don't have any sort of contact having to do with that" kind of thing. So it's like, this must have happened somewhere else kind of thing.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting. That's a really interesting way to express that. Is that coming from the culture?
>
> Julie: I think so. I think she didn't want me or anybody else to think of her badly as a parent. I think she thought it would reflect directly on them as the family.

The above excerpts illustrate a dissonance between perceptions of normative beliefs and personalized experiences in day-to-day living. As Alice and Julie assert, such dissonance creates tensions between society and individuals that may create further frustrations (as depicted by Alice's frustrations at denial from parents around her, and by Julie's frustrations in her personal experiences of adolescents coming into contact with pornography in comparison to observed actions from others). Furthermore, Julie points to the perception that parents judge other parents upon discovering that an adolescent

outside of their family has engaged in pornography consumption.

The next category of descriptive norms relates to parental perceptions of parent-child pornography communication. Again, this category explored perceptions of what most mothers do/believe, what most fathers do/believe, and beliefs about parent-child pornography communication as a whole. Mountain West participants exemplified more divergent opinions regarding parent-child pornography communication, with mixed beliefs concerning whether parents hold such discussions with adolescents or not. In regards to mothers, all Mountain West participants suggested that most mothers do not speak with children about pornography. Mountain West participants perceived most mother's emotional responses as paired with negative reactions, including "yelling/screaming," shock, anger, and removing the pornographic content without further discussion. Amelia's perception depicts this response:

> Interviewer: Let's say that a child was exposed to some sort of pornographic material, from your perception, how would most mothers respond if they found out about this exposure?
>
> Amelia: Explosion.
>
> Interviewer: Explosion. Is that what you said? What do you mean by that?
>
> Amelia: I guess maybe explosive behavior.
>
> Interviewer: Okay, what might that look like?
>
> Amelia: Bursting into… I don't know, probably it might be in the form of yelling or just shock, or a surprise shock, and I guess blaming… blaming either the kid, or themselves for not having had… I guess if it was maybe on the computer where they didn't have filters or so just a sense of guilt.
>
> Interviewer: Okay, so I've got guilt, blaming, explosion.
>
> Amelia: Anger.
>
> Interviewer: Anger.

> Amelia: Yeah, anger.
>
> Interviewer: Do you think that this response would lead to mothers having a conversation?
>
> Amelia: Probably not… well the response would be the initial response, I guess. But then they would have to… they would confront it from another, you know, perspective. You can't just be angry and blame, so you would need to… you would need… the first measure would be to kind of try to… again, prevent exposure, and second to talk to your child.

Towards the end of this excerpt, Amelia begins to integrate her own thoughts as to what should be done when mothers discover that children encounter pornography. However, in terms of descriptive norms (or observations of how "most mothers" respond), Amelia uses words such as "explosion," "guilt," "blaming," and "anger" to describe her perception of typical responses. Actions such as blaming the child for coming into contact with pornography and/or blaming oneself for not having protected the adolescent from such exposure are identified. Amelia goes on to state that such responses often lead mothers to avoid using the word "pornography" altogether.

> Interviewer: Interesting, interesting. Okay. So then, as a whole, from your perception… do you think most moms talk with their kids about pornography?
>
> Amelia: Some, like, just naturally without anything having happened?
>
> Interviewer: Uh huh, or either way, just in general.
>
> Amelia: I would think mostly not.
>
> Interviewer: Okay.
>
> Amelia: I mean maybe they would not explicitly use that word, because when you even put filters on your child's devices, you're not probably using that word, but you would say you want to prevent inappropriate sites, or it might get into that discussion, but I guess I would say they might state it in a more generalized way.

Amelia points to the perception that mothers may avoid using the word "pornography" in

parent-child conversations and substitute pornography to more generalized terminology such as “inappropriate” content. Whereas the perception that mothers do not directly discuss pornography with children is presented, some parents may be holding more generalized discussions with children that suggest similar ideas. However, generalized substitutions may lead children to construct misunderstandings of pornography and create confusion if/when adolescents encounter such material. Implications related to avoidance in using the word pornography will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Another descriptive norm subcategory regards perceptions of how most fathers respond to adolescent pornography exposure. Mountain West participants’ perceptions ranged from most fathers talk with their children about pornography and are often “less negative” and “less dramatic” because they are “in the mindset of trying to teach and fix,” to most fathers would not consider adolescent pornography exposure a “big deal.” The split in responses was fairly even across the case. However, several Mountain West participants made a clear distinction between father responses to sons and father responses to daughters. Becky, for example, discusses her perception of fathers discussing pornography with their children:

> Becky: I would say probably more fathers do than mothers, maybe… to boys anyway. For girls I would say that dads do not talk to girls about it, but I would say that they probably talk to the boys.
>
> Interviewer: More so?
>
> Becky: Uh huh.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Any thoughts as to why that might be?
>
> Becky: I don’t know… this might just be my perception, but I think most people think that that’s just kind of a boy thing to do and that girls don’t do that. And so, to most parents, I don’t think it would cross their mind… if they had a girl. I think that society just kind of puts it out there that it’s boys that do that. But I would

> think that the dads would feel more of a responsibility to talk to their sons about it.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting, interesting - in comparison with their daughters?
> Becky: Yeah.

Becky perceives that some parents believe adolescent pornography exposure is not associated with female adolescents. Rather, pornography is "just kind of a boy thing to do." This perception plays into Becky's reasoning as to why more fathers discuss pornography with sons as opposed to daughters; she observes that parents often associate adolescent pornography exposure as more of an event that occurs among adolescent males in comparison to adolescent females. Another interesting observation in this dialogue is Becky's neglecting to use the word "pornography" in her descriptions. Rather, she refers to adolescent pornography exposure as "it." This observation relates to other previously stated descriptive norms by Mountain West participants, in that parents sometimes avoid using the word "pornography" when addressing the topic. This observation will also be addressed in Chapter 5.

The final expressed subcategory of parental role descriptive norms are general beliefs related to parent-child pornography communication. Within this subcategory, several observations concerning descriptive norms surfaced. The first observation regards perceived emotional responses from most parents when thinking about conversing with their children about pornography. When asked about emotional responses most parents experience when thinking about talking to children about pornography, Mountain West participant descriptions included negative emotions such as "scared," "fear," "embarrassment," "hesitant," "dread," and "uncomfortable." Alice provides insight to this negativity within her discussion of "fear" in the following

excerpt:

> Interviewer: What emotion do most parents pair with thinking about having a conversation with a child about pornography?
>
> Alice: Scared. Scared, something you don't really want to talk about, but you know you have to. Almost like talking about death. Really, like, "If mom and dad die, who would you live with or who would you want to live with?" For me, anyways, it would be the same thing. Pornography—it's out there. It exists. I'd rather you know about it than be naive and have no clue about what it means or what it is.
>
> Interviewer: Why do you think most people feel that fear… that scared emotion?
>
> Alice: Because you want your child to remain a child. You don't want them… they're going to be an adult way too quick, anyway. And giving them more and more knowledge… yes, you want them to be educated. You don't want them to be naive. But there's just things you don't want your child to know about until they're an adult. But sometimes it comes up and you have to bring it up ahead of time. Whether it be certain circumstances at school or family problems or a friend having issues. Sometimes it just has to be brought up earlier than you want it to […] It also depends on the family—the child, the family, the parent. I know parents that, like I said, they are so closed-minded that they believe that this never, ever happens. And they don't talk about anything. I think if they found out that they're son was looking at pornography on a phone at school with another friend, they would pretend it never happened. They would pick him up from school and just not talk about it and pretend it never happened. But then I know parents that would talk to them, like "Why were you interested in looking at that? Why did you want to see it? Why were you intrigued by that? Do you know what pornography is?"
>
> Interviewer: So then again, a mixture of responses?
>
> Alice: Yes.

Alice's comments illustrate a tension between a parental desire for children to remain innocent and present struggles of parenting in a world where children are presented with adult content. Alice implies that such tensions between innocence and needed awareness and knowledge of pornography creates emotional distress for many parents that stimulates a sense of fear. Again, emotional variances create a certain complexity to

parent-child pornography communication as parents may struggle with not only what to say, but emotional barriers that discourage engagement in pornography conversations.

Despite perceiving more negative emotions related to parent-child pornography communication, the majority of Mountain West participants articulated positive outcomes concerning parent-child pornography communication. As Jim suggests, parent-child pornography communication is often considered an "uncomfortable conversation," but at the same time, Jim acknowledges "but we know we need to." As a whole, Mountain West participants identified positive outcomes in talking with children about pornography as a perceived norm for most parents. For instance, Jillian describes her observations of positive outcomes:

> Interviewer: What do you think most parents believe would be the outcome of having a conversation with kids about pornography? Would it be a positive? Negative?
>
> Jillian: Definitely positive, yes.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. What do you think most parents believe, in terms of if it would influence the child in a specific way?
>
> Jillian: I think it would help them to be more safe, and to be aware of not sending pictures of themselves and things like that, and how that can come back to hurt them. Or, you know, kids pass on pictures like there's no tomorrow. And so you pass a picture to somebody, you think it's just for their eyes and the whole school sees it. So things like that I think are important to talk about, and also just to bring up… conversations about what they see, and to help them understand what that means and talking about their feelings on that. It's an important discussion to have in terms of their sexual development and comfort with that.

Although Jillian begins to integrate her own beliefs towards the conclusion of the excerpt, her response illuminates a perception that most parents see value in parent-child pornography communication. As Jillian states, conversing with adolescents in an open manner about "what they see, and to help them understand what that means, and talking

about their feelings on that" is important to adolescent sexual development.

Other parents communicated similar viewpoints regarding perceptions of pornography education through parent-child communication. Alice, for example, highlights a parental fear that education can lead to curiosity. However, her perception is that most parents will push through potential fears and recognize the importance of education:

> Alice: I think most people would be worried that their children would look it up and try to find out what pornography is. But I think that they would realize that if you do talk to them and they're educated about what's happening, that's better. It's almost like alcohol or drugs. It's just... educate them and tell them what happens… with any situation. Pornography, alcohol, drugs, bullying. Anything. Just educate them. Let them know what happens, what it is, and why it happens. But they're going to be curious. That's their nature. That's how they are. They're going to be curious. And whether they look at pornography and see it and think, "Okay. That's what it is. That's really gross, I don't want to see that again." Or they might be intrigued and want to see more. Or, I mean, you have wedded couples that they have to watch pornography in order to get in the mood. But for teenagers, you know, I think the best we can do is educate them just like any other subject.

Alice's perception of parental beliefs concerning pornography education integrates a variety of responses from adolescents—from believing pornography is "gross" to intriguing to using it as a tool to get in "the mood." However, she compares pornography education to educating adolescents about any other subject, such as "alcohol, drugs, bullying," and so forth. Such education points to a descriptive norm that whereas parents hold a variety of viewpoints towards pornography, parents discussing pornography with adolescents is valuable.

Injunctive Norms

RQ_2's purpose was to explore the injunctive norms (e.g., what do those closest to us think we "ought" to do?) associated with parents addressing pornography with

children. Similar to Mountain West participant descriptive norms, a wide variety of injunctive norms were observed. These norms ranged on a spectrum from not addressing pornography with children because those closest to the participants had viewed and accepted it themselves, to the sense that external organizations outside of the family context—such as schools and religious organizations—should promote parent-child pornography communication. Three specific patterns were observed. The first pattern regards messages about what "ought to be done" by those close to Mountain West participants concerning parent-child pornography communication. Most Mountain West participants suggested that those close to them would encourage parents to talk with children about pornography, although many participants stated that others would not provide specific advice as to how this conversation should occur. Interestingly, when asked who shared parent-child pornography communication messages, a disparity emerged from messages shared by those close to the participants and messages shared by the participants' own parents. Only one participant mentioned that she grew up in an "open" household where parents encouraged open family communication. Other participants articulated more closed or authoritarian family households--in which parents did not address specific topics with children and/or the parent would tell a child "no" without explanation as to why. Carol, for instance, shared a childhood experience that illustrated her family environment:

> Carol: It just kind of seems a topic… I mean, like, for me, I've never… it's one of those taboo topics. That you don't really, you don't discuss much with. I know I've never really had a discussion with my parents on it. It was just… I guess I just knew that, that that wasn't something that you did. And the couple of times when I was way little, and I found one of my uncle's magazines, it was… it was, "get out of there!" It was… you know, hidden. And it wasn't talked about. It was just one of those, you know… I really don't know how much it is talked about in households today.

In a later part of the interview, Carol goes on to give further information about her own family dynamics as a child. She states:

> Carol: I think it would probably… just how the family dynamics… like my own, the family I grew up in… probably would not. They would be like, "no, you can't see that." They weren't real good about… I mean they were fabulous. I love my mom and dad. But as far as explaining and speaking what I thought about it and things, they never… they never did that. And so it was just like, you know, "no, don't touch it," or "you're not supposed to do this, so don't do this" type of thing.

Other parents echoed similar childhood experiences as Carols', stating that their own parents did not share messages about sexual topics (including pornography) with them as children and still do not talk about sexual topics today. This pattern signifies a possible injunctive norm that previous generations were not advocates of sexual communication and/or parent-child pornography communication. Moreover, this injunctive norm may be tied to generational influences on a divergence between messages most parents received as children to shifting descriptive norms of today: whereas Mountain West participants expressed the descriptive norm that many parents do see value in talking with children about pornography, they also shared injunctive norms that suggest that sexual topics (including pornography) were often not discussed in previous family settings. Such tensions among norms may be linked to contrasting descriptive and injunctive norms in that many parents view pornography as a "taboo" and "uncomfortable" topic, yet perceive value in discussing pornography with children.

A second observed injunctive norm involved messages shared by external organizations and messages shared by Mountain West participants concerning parent-child pornography communication. The Mountain West School District was selected because the district is currently making efforts to hold internet safety/antipornography educational presentations for parents. Surprisingly, however, the majority of Mountain

West parents were not familiar with any organization that shared antipornography and promoted parent-child pornography communication messages. Julie, who currently works for the school district, provided insight in the following dialogue as to why parents may not have known about the district initiative:

> Interviewer: One of the reasons I wanted to interview parents from your school district is because of the media safety and antipornography classes being offered. But every parent that I've talked to so far has not been really aware of those at all… so that's interesting. So it's not really being advertised to parents as being helpful with pornography at all?
>
> Julie: No, I don't think so at all. Even working there, knowing that was happening, I would have never guessed that that was a topic that they would have brought up.
>
> Interviewer: Okay.
>
> Julie: I would think it was more like keeping children's information safe while they're online, and things like that. I wouldn't think that pornography would have even been included in that topic.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Do you think that including pornography would be a helpful topic for parents if some class was about it?
>
> Julie: Absolutely. Yes. I do.
>
> Interviewer: Any thoughts as to how to advertise, or share that message with parents?
>
> Julie: I think they would need to come right out and say what it's about, rather than making, you know… other than that I don't think parents are going to know that that's being offered.

This passage is insightful to organizations sharing messages concerning parental actions of what "ought to be done." Similar to descriptive norms of defining pornography, misunderstanding and variances in conceptualizations of pornography can occur when promoting positive injunctive norms concerning the actions parents should undertake. As Julie observed, several parents did not associate internet safety and adolescent

pornography consumption in the same discussion. Julie suggests that organizations need to "come right out and say what it's about" when promoting parental pornography education; otherwise, interventional intentions to spread positive parent-child pornography communication messages may be lost.

Similar to the lack of parental awareness/interactions with school-district-offered media safety courses, most Mountain West participants suggested that parents do not discuss pornography issues with other parents (one participant was the exception as she mentioned that she has heard of experiences from other parents talking to children about pornography). A central perception was that adolescent exposure to pornography is a closed and/or personal topic that is not frequently discussed in general. Commenting on this perception, one participant mentioned that adolescent pornography exposure is not a subject that naturally comes up when talking to other parents and is often considered uncomfortable by many.

One final injunctive norm involves *who* ought to discuss pornography with children. Observed injunctive norms varied from participant to participant. For instance, when asked about what those closest to her would say regarding whether she ought to address pornography with her own children, Julie stated those closest to her would assume that she is "handling it" and not interfere. Those close to Julie would not attempt to heavily intervene as they would consider pornography a "personal matter." Contrastingly, Sarah and Jim expressed insight derived from external organizations that held influence on what "ought to be done." Sarah, for instance, expressed that her religious organization shares messages regarding the harms of pornography and would be supportive of parent-child pornography communication. She communicated that people

from her religious group would feel exposure to pornography is "not appropriate and the degeneration of society" and that parents are encouraged to "teach them [children] about why it's wrong." Moreover, Jim, who works as an educator, felt that schools held a societal responsibility to educate children concerning the exploitation of women. He argued that school environments would have greater impact in influencing children's perceptions as the presented information would be derived from a more academic, research-oriented background. Consequently, as issues related to pornography are often considered sensitive in nature, acknowledging varying perspectives and environments as to how children receive pornography education may be useful.

Case #3—Grand Lake: A School District Without a Media Intervention Parent Program

Descriptive Norms

Analogous to the UCAP and Mountain West participants, participants in Case #3, Grand Lake, were also asked the same interview questions that explored descriptive norms related to pornography's definition, pornography's impact on adolescents, as well as norms related to parents addressing pornography with adolescents. In terms of definitional responses, Grand Lake participants offered more broad definitions regarding how most people define pornography. Three participants correlated the word "nudity" to most people's definition of pornography. Tracy simply suggested that pornography is "nudity" or "displaying yourself naked." Edward suggested that, for most people, pornography is nudity that has a "negative connotation." Such articulations in definition differed from other examined cases in that most Grand Lake participants did not

distinguish between nudity, sexual acts, and sexual exploitation.

Other Grand Lake participants integrated descriptions of actions within pornography content as a key element of pornography's definition. Descriptions such as "pictures of people doing obscene things that are naked," "viewing of individuals without clothing for the purpose of sexual pleasure of sort," and "viewing naked photos or pictures that are scantily clad of a male or female body part" were recorded. However, these definitions did not associate pornography with the sexual exploitation of others. Only one participant (Alex) communicated thoughts related to sexual exploitation, suggesting that most people define pornography as "degrading" and "more about people just simply using other people for personal gratification." Furthermore, the majority of Grand Lake participants did not emphasize mediums by which pornography is accessed. Only 4 Grand Lake participants included medium descriptors; these descriptors remained broad, such as "pictures," "movies," and/or "photos." Consequently, technological medium was not a central part of Grand Lake descriptive norms related to pornography's definition.

One participant's perception served as an outlier in comparison to other Grand Lake participant responses. Lindsay described cultural implications as a key component to the definition of the word, "pornography." When questioned by the researcher, "From your perception, how do most people define the word 'pornography'?" she expressed the following:

> Lindsay: Something taboo.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Can you explain a little bit more what you mean by that?
>
> Lindsay: That it would be taboo in the sense… that for some people, taboo would mean, "Oh, because it is taboo, it's okay for me to really go down that avenue."

> For other people, it would be like shutting the door… like, "I don't even want to talk about it, I don't want my children to know about it, this is something that even my spouse and I don't talk about." So taboo in different ways.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting. So you think most people connect that with the definition itself? From your perception?
>
> Lindsay: Yes.

Lindsay offers polarizing examples to illustrate her perception of "something taboo." Examples include the desire to seek out pornography because it is often considered "taboo" versus the response of disregarding and avoidance of pornography—even among more intimate relationships. Again, Lindsay's perception points to the complexity of pornography and associates individual/cultural influencers as a key component to its conceptualization and how it is expressed and addressed.

Grand Lake participants were also asked about the emotional responses most people experience when they hear the word, "pornography." The majority of Grand Lake participants responded with more negative emotions, including "disgust," "horrifying," "degrading," "humiliating, "guilt, "judgement," "fear," and "anger." Similar to the UCAP and Mountain West participants, expressed emotions often led participants to describe a layer of variables and other emotions. For example, the following dialogue illustrates Kevin's thoughts regarding feelings of uncertainty that may be linked to emotional responses of "anger" and "fear."

> Interviewer: What emotion do most people connect to the word, "pornography"?
>
> Kevin: Anger. Fear.
>
> Interviewer: Okay.
>
> Kevin: They just don't know where it's headed… what it would do to a person, or do know what it's going to do a person. Anger that it's been available… those kind of things.

> Interviewer: Okay, so I've got anger and fear, so fairly negative emotions then overall?
>
> Kevin: Yes.

Kevin articulates potential uncertainties that can be tied to emotional responses of pornography. "Anger" and "fear," for example, may stem from individual perceptions of the repercussions of pornography consumption. Again, this example illustrates a connection between emotional descriptive norms and the complexity of influential varying circumstances. Other participants communicated a similar observation. Lindsay, for example, delves further into the emotion of "guilt" in her description of emotional responses from adolescents and parents.

> Lindsay: Oh absolutely. And I think there's the guilt of, "I wouldn't want my parents to know." The guilt of, "Oh, I know some of my friends are into this, and I feel guilty that I'm not part of it." Then there's the guilt of knowing that, "Oh my goodness, what if I haven't done enough as a parent, and my child goes down that avenue?" I mean there's all kinds of guilt. Or even in a religious sense: "I've been taught this all my life, and all of a sudden, no one knows this, and yet I can still function with my friends, and they don't know, but they still accept me. Would they accept me if they knew?"

Lindsay points to a variety of settings that engender feelings of "guilt"—from adolescents feeling tensions between observations of friends versus meeting parental expectations to questioning one's own acceptance within a religious group if others learned of pornography consumption. Thus, though expressed descriptive norms concerning emotional responses to pornography were categorized as more negative, individual circumstantial context provided depth and diversity in meaning to how such emotions surface and are interpreted.

Parallel to a range of emotions communicated by UCAP and Mountain West participants, a few participants communicated more neutral/positive perceptions of

emotional responses. Tasha, for instance, associated the word "excitement" as a perceived emotion for most people. She states:

> Tasha: Excitement, probably.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Any thoughts?
>
> Tasha: Not me personally, but…
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Any thoughts on excitement… why that might be?
>
> Tasha: Because I think people are… most people are tempted with it. Just in… forbidden. It's taboo. It's exciting because it's against the rules, maybe.

Similar to Lindsay's observations of pornography's definitions, Tasha uses the word "taboo" to describe pornography as perceived as less talked about and forbidden. Her perception suggests that this "forbidden" cultural perspective drives one's desire to engage in pornographic material because it is perceived as "against the rules." Consequently, another Grand Lake participant descriptive norm is that whereas many view pornography as harmful, the tabooness related to cultural responses to pornography perpetuates further emotion and/or the desire to engage with it.

The next category of descriptive norms relates to perceptions of societal beliefs about adolescents and pornography. Two contrasting descriptive norms were observed. The first suggested that most parents believe adolescents are encountering pornography. Moreover, several participants commented on technological influences in perpetuating pornography exposure among adolescents. Sandra, for example, states:

> Interviewer: What do most people believe about adolescents being exposed to pornography?
>
> Sandra: I would think so… the more technology becomes easily accessible to the younger kids and the younger generation…. my kids have access on a game app, where an ad pops up when they're playing a game and all of a sudden there's a very scantily clad woman that says, "hey click here and see this." And I… it's

> becoming more and more, to where it's so easily accessible and yeah. I mean you don't even have to be looking for it anymore.
>
> Interviewer: It just kind of pops up?
> Sandra: Oh yes.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting. Do you think most parents around you have that same belief or thought about adolescents and pornography?
>
> Sandra: Oh yeah. I mean I've talked to friends, and we've had conversations about it… where things start as simple as the kids aren't looking… it's just simply there. And it piques the curiosity and all of a sudden this whole door is opened that is very hard to get closed.

Whereas Sandra begins this dialogue by expressing her personal beliefs regarding adolescents and pornography, she extends her views to describe observed perceptions of others around her. Sandra suggests that other parents are aware of how easily accessible online pornographic content can be for adolescents, as well as the difficulties adolescents may face with continued exposure. She suggests parents also recognize that adolescents may not be specifically searching for pornography— "it's just simply there."

Other Grand Lake participant perceptions differed from Sandra's. A second observed descriptive norm asserted that most parents either avoid and/or are in denial concerning adolescents encountering pornography. For instance, Rachel suggested that parents are much more concerned about adolescents pursuing drugs and alcohol and focus preventative efforts in these areas. Tracy, another participant, argued that most parents are too busy with life and work to address pornography with adolescents. Tracy observes that part of this "busyness" stems from most parents not wanting to learn if adolescents encounter pornography, out of fear that it may turn into an uncomfortable and/or difficult situation.

Other participants suggested that parental denial of adolescents encountering

pornography originates from the belief that adolescents are "good kids" and therefore pornography exposure is unlikely to occur. Kevin, for instance, provided greater detail concerning the general denial he observes in his community:

> Kevin: I think that there is a general denial that adolescents have access. Or their adolescents… so even though he or she has access, she isn't doing… isn't taking advantage of that access. They [parents] are just in denial of the reality that exists. I think that, unfortunately, for Christian parents, it seems like they… there's a feeling that there's a whole other world out there. And they're the ones that's evolved and you know… "not my kid." So I do think there's some issues there, about the reality… that if you give a 14-year-old boy a smart phone, they have access to anything the internet has on it, including pornography. But the greater concern is the actual people they interact with. So a young man has a phone. Parents want to know who they're texting and what they're texting about, and not necessarily looking at stuff on the web, but, "Who in person are you connecting with?" and so that tends to be the greater concern. "Who could you actually walk up to, and spend time with?"
>
> Interviewer: Interesting.
>
> Kevin: Versus, "What are you looking at over here on this?" Because, you know, that's what I hear more is, you know, "I do make sure I know who they're talking to… all their friends." And all that stuff. But, I don't know, it's a little bit longer, protracted answer.
>
> Interviewer: So from your perception… I just want to make sure I understood this correctly… more parents are concerned about who their child is coming into contact with as opposed to what their child is coming into contact with in terms of content?
>
> Kevin: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: Any thoughts as to why that might be?
>
> Kevin: Well, it could be a level of lack of knowledge or understanding of how easily pornography is accessible because it might be this belief that it's something that's really… you need to dig for, or drill for, to find. Whereas friends, especially at… to texting access, it's like instantaneously presence, and their concern is bad influence… always. Bad influence on… "I don't want my kid to get into trouble because he's walking with this kid." You know, that kind of stuff.

Kevin attributes two characteristics to parent denial in terms of adolescent pornography

exposure. The first is the belief that one's own child does not come into contact with pornography. A second attribute suggests that parents may feel they are properly protecting children from online threats if they know *who* their child engages with via technology. Yet, Kevin's observations suggest that this belief can distract parents from monitoring the types of content children encounter. As he perceives, some parents believe that pornography may be content that adolescents really need to "dig for."

The third category of descriptive norms examined parental roles and adolescent pornography exposure. In terms of parental responses, all Grand Lake participants perceived that most parents (including both mothers and fathers) do not initiate parent-child pornography conversations with adolescents. The majority of Grand Lake participants noted that conversation regarding pornography may follow the event of a parent learning their child encountered pornographic content, but this communication originates as more responsive than preventative. Varying beliefs as to why parents do not initiate conversations about pornography with adolescents surfaced. In terms of a typical mother's response, Tracy argued that most mothers struggle to find the balance between education and protecting adolescent innocence. When asked, "How do most mothers respond if they learn their child was exposed to some sort of pornographic material?" she states,

> Tracy: I think they would be horrified. You never want that innocence to be lost until it has to be lost. That's my opinion.
>
> Interviewer: So I've got horrified. Okay. Any other thoughts there?
>
> Tracy: Like I said, you just don't… you don't want your child to lose their innocence. One would hope that they would just learn and grow in a normal, quote/unquote normal time and measure instead of… just an automatic, "Oh by the way look at this" and then the whole perception of the child is changed.

> Interviewer: Interesting. Do you think that this response, do you think it would lead most moms to talk with their kids about pornography?
>
> Tracy: I would hope so. Yeah, once they're really aware of what's going on, I would hope that there could be a dialogue.
>
> Interviewer: Do you think most moms actually do?
>
> Tracy: Probably not.

Tracy associates a mother's response of "horrified" to the idea that discussing pornography with children may alter their perspective. She connects this perception to a mother's hope that their adolescent experiences a "normal" childhood and implies that discussions about pornography alter "the whole perception of the child."

Whereas Tracy connects a mother's response of "horrified" to the possibility of loss of adolescent innocence, Lindsay articulated a different interpretation of "horrified." She states:

> Lindsay: Most mothers would be horrified.
>
> Interviewer: Okay.
>
> Lindsay: They would be horrified […] It would be an automatic thing of, "No. Close the door. We are not going there." And so making it a real taboo then. It would be like, "I am embarrassed that you would even think to do that." Okay.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting, so…
>
> Lindsay: And I think too, I wonder too, so you can get pornography online and so forth, but also there's pornography as far as magazines go… *Playboy*, and so if you found that, would you say "Oh my son or daughter is just going down the wrong way," or would you simply say, "what is the situation?" I think for a lot of moms, it would be just totally, like, "I don't know what we're going to do. I guess I'm going to have to talk to my husband." You know what I mean? "We've got to get to the bottom of this." You know, that kind of thing.
>
> Interviewer: That's really interesting, any idea where that general reaction may be coming from?
>
> Lindsay: Fear.

> Interviewer: Fear. Fear of?
> Lindsay: Fear of "My kid's going to be… oh my word, what if I… ahhh three years from now I look up, and he's been molesting children." Or fear of, "Oh my word, his marriage dissolved because I didn't stop that the first time I saw that." Fear of, "he's going to lose his job. Fear of, "What are people going to think of him if they found out? He's such an upstanding member of the community." Fear, fear, fear.
>
> Interviewer: Interesting.
>
> Lindsay: Rather than taking it back to say, "Mmmmm, what were the circumstances that even started that?"

Lindsay links "horrified" to a potential parental fear and uncertainty regarding the impact of pornography on adolescents. However, as opposed to fear motivating mothers to initiate and/or prevent certain outcomes, Lindsay suggests that fear influences mothers to avoid pornography communication in the form of an automatic response, or "No. Close the door. We are not going there." Underlying both Tracy's and Lindsay's explanations, these examples illuminate a descriptive norm that parents may not view open parent-child communication and education as an effective and positive action in addressing pornography with children. Additionally, another interpretation may be that parents' initial emotional responses trump rationales that encourage open dialogue. Awareness of these obstacles may be helpful in working to create resources and conversational guides for parent-child pornography communication and will be addressed in Chapter 5.

The second descriptive norm subcategory of adolescent pornography exposure and parental roles involved the responses of fathers. Grand Lake participants expressed a more split reaction in their perceptions of how most fathers respond to adolescent pornography exposure. Kevin, for instance, perceived that most fathers experience less anger in comparison to mothers and subsequently focus on fixing and/or addressing the

problem to prevent future pornography exposures. Edward reported similar observations as Kevin, commenting that most fathers might be "a little more understanding" in comparison to mothers. Edward goes on to say that fathers would not be "so quick to rush to make it a big deal." He states, "I think they would be more likely to just kind of want to talk about it rather than trying to cover it up so nobody knew." On the other hand, Tasha suggested that most fathers would respond with avoidance. Tasha shared her perception of societal norms, arguing that pornography is often viewed as more acceptable for males and, consequently, acceptance of this norm creates less of a negative reaction from fathers concerning adolescent pornography exposure. Cassandra shared a similar perspective to Tasha's in the following dialogue:

> Interviewer: So I asked you about how most mothers might respond. The next question is, how would most fathers react if they found out about this exposure?
>
> Cassandra: Oh I think they'd be more even than the moms.
>
> Interviewer: How so? Can you explain that a little bit?
>
> Cassandra: I think most boys have gone through that when they wanted to look at pornography. And so I don't think they [fathers] are surprised. They're not taken aback by it. They view it more, not a rite of passage, but as a sign of maturity. Shows that there's a change in what your child is looking at, or at least looking for.

Cassandra's observations suggest that some fathers view adolescent interest in pornography as a "sign of maturity"—particularly as, from Cassandra's perception, many fathers have experienced this interest themselves. Accordingly, Cassandra links her viewpoint to most fathers' responses to adolescent pornography exposure as "more even than the moms." Later in the interview, Cassandra connects this "more even" response to her perception of whether fathers address pornography with adolescents. Similar to other perspectives shared by Grand Lake participants, Cassandra responds with a more reactive

answer.

> Cassandra: Not outright. I think they wait for something to happen. They wait for "the shoe to drop," so to speak. And then they pick it up and do what they need to do. I hope they do what they need to do.

The phrase waiting for "the shoe to drop" implies a more reactive than proactive approach regarding parent-child pornography communication. As previously mentioned, Grand Lake was not the only case where this descriptive norm was unearthed. Implications of this descriptive norm will be evaluated in comparison to other cases in Chapter 5.

A final subcategory of descriptive norms related to parental emotional responses and beliefs about conversational outcomes to parent-child pornography communication. When asked about emotional responses most parents experience when thinking about talking to children about pornography, Grand Lake participant descriptions included "fear," "anxious," "trepidation," "denial," "horrible, massive subject," "guilt," "uncomfortable," and "uneasiness." Expressed emotions by Grand Lake participants incorporated more of a negative than positive connotation. Explanations of identified emotions varied. For example, Tracy's perception highlighted a parental fear of children losing their innocence through pornography exposure and suggested most parents connect parent-child pornography communication to a loss of adolescent innocence as well. Alex also connected "fear" to the emotions most parents experience regarding parent-child pornography communication. However, his perception of fear stemmed more from parents questioning, "What if I mess this up? What if I send the wrong message to my child?" Kevin expressed similar concerns as Alex:

> Kevin: Probably anxiety of being misunderstood or whatever. There's probably a fear of finding out that it's already happened. Again, that denial part. "I don't

> really have to have this conversation, but I'll do it anyway because I'm pretty sure that this isn't the case…" just a little bit of that I think.

Tied to a fear of parents "being misunderstood" by their children, Kevin included another component of parental fear. He suggests that some parents may fear learning that their child has already encountered pornography by engaging in parent-child pornography communication. Kevin's perception illustrates a more reactive response as it integrates the notion that adolescent pornography exposure has already occurred and parents learn about this exposure after-the-fact. Furthermore, Kevin links emotional fear to a general sense of denial wherein parents may presume their child has not been exposed to pornography. His response correlates to other descriptive norm categories regarding a denial from parents that asserts, "Pornography is out there, but it's not influencing my child."

Another perception concerning emotional responses was shared by Tasha. When asked, "What emotion do most parents pair with thinking about having a conversation about pornography with their child?" Tasha responds with the following:

> Tasha: Guilt. Probably guilt, and uneasiness.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. And guilt… any thoughts as to that particular emotion?
>
> Tasha: Because they probably tell their kids, "Oh don't. This is no good, don't watch this." But then they do. They watch it themselves. You know, do as I say, not as I do kind of thing.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. And then the second emotion, did you say, "uncomfortable"? Is that what you said?
>
> Tasha: Uh huh. Uneasy, uncomfortable.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Any thoughts as to that emotion?
>
> Tasha: Because talking to your kids about sex is always kind of an uncomfortable. You know, how much do they need to know? How much do they want to know?

How far should you go? How detailed?

Tasha's response offers insight concerning perceived experienced emotions of "guilt" and "uneasiness." With guilt, she highlights a double standard of parents communicating antipornography messages with adolescents but then engaging in pornography themselves. This perception may correlate to varying perspectives of pornography and its use among parents. Moreover, Tasha connects the second emotion, "uneasiness," to a series of hypothetical questions parents ask when addressing sexual topics with children. Queries related to "how much," "how far," and "how detailed" point to the difficulty some parents face in finding balance to initiate developmentally appropriate sexual communication. Organizations that distribute content regarding parent-child pornography communication should work to share messages that educate parents on age-appropriate content, as such materials may help alleviate parental concerns.

Injunctive Norms

Comparable to descriptive norms, several categories of injunctive norms were observed. Again, injunctive norms explore messages regarding what "ought to be done" by influential individuals and/or groups. Three specific patterns were described by Grand Lake participants. The first pattern regards messages by those close to Grand Lake participants concerning parent-child pornography communication. The majority of Grand Lake participants shared more of a "hands-off" message concerning what those close to them suggest they ought to do. For instance, Edward stated that those close to him would encourage him to "handle" the situation, but "handle it how [he] would handle it." Edward suggests that specific messages concerning what should be done would not

be included. Lindsay shared a similar perspective:

> Lindsay: I think they would be… I do think all of the people that I know would be supportive, but at the same time realize my character enough to say, "She's going to handle it." They would have to look in and say, "They're quality people, they're going to handle this." If this was something she did and it was online… and she had a friend… took advantage of somebody… it would be like, "Okay, we really don't need to say anything because we know them as a couple […] I guess I would probably say, you know, "She's going to handle this. But at the same time I would give her my unconditional love that this isn't about you, this is about how you're going to solve your problem. So I don't have a value towards you about this. I wouldn't judge you."

Lindsay also articulates a more distanced yet supportive and nonjudgmental message from those close to her. She emphasizes the value of trust and support she receives from others—yet with this trust comes the perception that parents know how to best parent their own adolescents.

Two participants shared more involved messages from those around them. Those close to Tracy, for example, would suggest that she should be open and honest with her children concerning pornography. Rachel expressed a similar perspective, citing suggestions such as sharing facts with children and being aware of events happening within children's lives in general:

> Rachel: I think talk to them about it. And be aware of what's going on with your kids, too.
>
> Interviewer: So in terms of talking to them about it, what might that mean? What would those around you say that "talking" means?
>
> Rachel: Showing them all the facts about it. And the good and the bad… well no, there is no good. Talking about everything about it. Not just what it can do to you now, but what can happen to you in the future.
>
> Interviewer: So more the effects of pornography?
>
> Rachel: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: And from your perception, what would those around you say are the

effects of pornography?

Rachel: Quality of life.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you explain that a little bit more?

Rachel: Well, like if you are exposed, it could lead you to different kinds of things, maybe. I can see it leading to alcoholism, drugs. It's just one of those things where there's no good out of it.

Rachel identifies two discussion topics that those close to her encourage her to integrate: the first is discussing the facts about pornography with adolescents and the second is addressing the impacts of pornography and potential consequences of pornography consumption. She also hears messages concerning maintaining awareness of the activities her children are engaged in. Accordingly, Grand Lake participants highlight varying injunctive norms: for some parents, injunctive norms may involve parents' need for space, nonjudgmental responses, and flexibility in allowing parents to address adolescent pornography exposure on an individual basis. For others, parents may be open to hearing education and factual information that may be helpful when addressing pornography with adolescents. Similar to the UCAP and Mountain West participants, differing injunctive norms surfaced depending on parental family background and personal interactions; thus, flexibility and allowance for a variety of perspectives is necessary when sharing insights concerning parent-child pornography communication.

Another category of injunctive norms related to messages shared by older generations to current parents of adolescents. The majority of Grand Lake participants identified a generational gap between the level of openness of sexual talk and pornography in a family setting from previous generations in comparison to current families. Although one participant (Lindsay) suggested that her parents would trust her

to handle the situation and not get involved unless asked, the majority of Grand Lake participants described more of a "closed door" policy concerning sexual topics. Cassandra, for example, describes an experience she recalls as a child in the following dialogue:

> Interviewer: Have your own parents shared any messages with you regarding talking to children about pornography?
>
> Cassandra: No. No, they wouldn't share. That is a closed door topic.
>
> Interviewer: So a closed door, is that what you said?
>
> Cassandra: Oh yes. My dad has his stack of *Playboys* in the garage that we weren't… quote/unquote "not to look at." But of course we all looked at them. You know. He said he had them because he liked to "hunt for the bunny."

Analysis of present injunctive norms from this dialogue reveals a combination of complex and contrasting ideas. For one, Cassandra relays a more closed family setting during her childhood in which pornography was defined as a "closed door topic." She also recalls being told "not to look at" pornography as a child despite the prevailing notion that conversation between parent-child about pornography was off limits—thus receiving the message that adolescent exposure to pornography is negative but not openly discussed. However, Cassandra recalls a direct awareness of where her father "hid" his stack of *Playboys* and uses the phrase "of course we all looked at them" to suggest that adolescents looking at parents' pornography is normative. Furthermore, Cassandra's father's use of humor in his comment "hunt for the bunny" implies a more lighthearted parental response to pornography consumption.

As depicted in this dialogue with Cassandra, injunctive norms illustrating messages about what parents ought to do concerning adolescent pornography exposure can be convoluted and confusing. Moreover, Cassandra's experience emphasizes a

disconnect between what is communicated and parental actions. Such disconnects may create greater levels of uncertainty among adolescents as contrasting responses are presented. Furthermore, this example illustrates a more authoritarian response to pornography and does not allow for further discussion as to why. An authoritarian response and/or avoidance was common among Grand Lake participants and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS: EMERGENT PATTERNS AND THEMES OF DESCRIPTIVE AND INJUNCTIVE NORMS PRESENT IN ALL CASES

The purpose of this investigation was to explore both descriptive and injunctive norms related to parent-child pornography communication. Three cases or groups of parents with varying levels of engagement in adolescent antipornography education were involved in this examination. The UCAP participants involved parents currently associated with an antipornography organization, Mountain West contained parents within a school district in the state of Utah that provides parental media safety classes (including parent-child pornography communication instruction), and Grand Lake integrated parents from a Colorado school district wherein no media intervention is present.

Although the researcher observed a variety of descriptive and injunctive norms within each case, several perceived norms surfaced in all cases. This section addresses both descriptive and injunctive norms related to parent-child pornography communication that were present in all cases, in efforts to provide a more summative overview and prompt discussion. Summative results will be interpreted to offer implications to individuals and organizations sharing parent-child pornography

communication messages. Findings and implications were categorized by patterns related to descriptive norms and patterns related to observed injunctive norms. I then conclude this chapter with a word on study limitations and suggestions for future research.

Cross-Case Descriptive Norms Concerning Parent-Child Pornography Communication

Definitions Related to Pornography Can Be Convoluted and Contextually Based

All participants were asked to provide their perception of descriptive norms concerning the definition of pornography. In regards to pornography's definition, participants in each case conveyed varying characteristics of pornography. Some participants selected to focus on the portrayed content within pornography, whereas others emphasized mediums used to access pornography. Some participants communicated implications related to pornography (e.g., defining pornography as sexual exploitation), whereas others articulated more broad, generalized terms to define pornography (e.g., defining pornography as "nudity"). Furthermore, at least one participant within each case commented on muddling implications related to most people's perception of the word "pornography," including associating pornography with visceral or personal experiences, difficulties identifying what is and is not considered pornography, as well as linking pornography with cultural associations (e.g., the definition of pornography is connected to cultural "taboo").

Variations in definition parallel patterns observed in the pornography literature.

As Owens, Behun, Manning, and Reid (2012) conclude, "there are almost as many definitions for sexually explicit material as there are individuals who have studied it" (p. 103). A comparable pattern was noted in this exploration: there were almost as many perceptions of societal definitions of pornography as there were participants in this investigation. As Tim from Mountain West pointed-out, what one person might consider pornography, another might view this same material as erotica. Julie from Mountain West presented similar ideas, commenting that most parents do not associate the phrase "media safety" with pornography and parent-child pornography communication.

The use of the term "pornography" becomes slippery as perceived descriptive norms suggest definitions and associations are ambiguous, complex, emotionally driven, and may rarely be centered on the intention to stimulate sexual arousal. Variances in perception envelop an array of ideas, responses, and implications. This research study indicates it may be essential to educate parents about how to define pornography *prior to* encouraging parents to discuss pornography with children. An array of viewpoints on the definition of pornography exists; however, providing parents accessibility to scholarly definitions outlined in Chapter 2 is a useful first step. In addition, prompting parental communication that can be understood by adolescents may combat perceived ambiguity.

Building parental self-efficacy in how to define and articulate the definition of pornography may be a crucial first step in boosting parent-child pornography communication. The sexual education literature notes that the greater confidence and comprehension parents hold prior to discussing sexual topics with children, the greater the likelihood that sexual conversations are interpreted positively by those involved (Jerman & Constantine, 2010). Furthermore, Jerman and Constantine also identify a

parent's sexual knowledge as a key predictor for whether parents engage in sexual communication. Providing resources that create ease and clarity for parents to define pornography with young people may prompt greater parental knowledge and, thus, increased levels of discussion.

Another insight asserts that similar ambiguities within pornography definitions may trickle down from parents to adolescents. Some scholars contend that messages experienced during childhood influences future sexual communication and frequently resemble the sexual education provided by previous generations (Fisher, 1990; Kniveton & Day,1999; Lehr, Demi, DiIorio, & Facteau, 2005). If parents struggle to provide a clear definition of pornography with children, it is reasonable to posit that adolescents may continue this trend with their future children. Moreover, a variety of definitions may prompt confusion and uncertainty among adolescent conceptualizations of how they should respond when encountering pornography. In reflection of these possible implications, the use of direct wording and teaching adolescents how to clearly define and identify pornography may be useful in stimulating greater discussion and understanding. Interventions sharing messages about parent-child pornography communication should keep parent education about pornography's definition and identification at the forefront of discussion to counteract varying normative perceptions.

Multilayered Emotional Responses

All participants were asked about emotional responses that most people experience when they hear the word, "pornography." The majority of participants identified more negative emotions in their responses. Expressed emotions that surfaced

in all cases included “fear,” “anger,” “judgement,” “avoidance,” and “guilt.” “Fear” and “anger” were the top two most frequently expressed emotions.

Two to four participants across cases conveyed more neutral/positive emotions that most people associate with pornography. Neutral/positive emotions included “intrigued,” “interested,” “excitement,” “humorous,” and “pleasurable.” Many of these participants associated responses such as “intrigued,” and “excitement” with implications of cultural “taboo” or pornography viewed as a “forbidden” topic as explanatory for positive/neutral responses.

Two insights emerge from the aforementioned perceptions of societal emotional responses. First, as discussed in the results section, emotions connected to pornography are frequently multilayered with an array of circumstantial and contextual influences; although participants across cases identified similar emotional descriptors, meanings linked to these descriptors varied from participant to participant. For instance, whereas one individual may link the emotion of “fear” with uncertainty as how to handle parent-child pornography communication, another may associate “fear” with the potential outcomes pornography consumption elicits on individuals.

To suggest that parental pornography education only encompasses strategies about how to discuss pornography with children may be naive and less effective. Results from this investigation suggest that parental “fear” spreads to variables beyond the actual conversation. Parent-child pornography communication interventions may need to educate parents on topics that surround the context of adolescent exposure to pornography to achieve more favorable impacts. Effects research—such as Owens, Behun, Manning, and Reid’s (2012) summative piece that reviews the impact of

pornography on adolescents, and Beyens, Vendebosch, and Eggermont's (2014) work on pornography and adolescent academic performance—may provide a more well-rounded parental perspective to the issue, and thus build parental confidence in addressing pornography with adolescents.

A second insight proposes that avoidance of parent-child pornography communication with adolescents may encourage further adolescent pornography engagement. Several participants perceived that pornography is a topic that is commonly associated with the emotion of avoidance, or "shoved under the rug." However, a few participants across cases connected the emotion of "avoidance" to increased emotional responses of "excitement" and/or "intrigue." These participants argued that a lack of parental pornography communication stimulates adolescent interest and curiosity about pornography, as adolescents are more inclined to explore topics that are portrayed as "taboo" and "forbidden."

This observation correlates to related research that identifies adolescence as a time of expanded learning and curiosity about the unknown (AACAP, 2016). Parents may not realize that "protective" avoidances of the topic of pornography with adolescents may, in turn, lead to greater curiosity and intrigue among adolescents. In essence, such parental avoidance may backfire as adolescents seek other, more attainable sources and content to learn about pornography (such as peers and/or content on the internet) rather than approaching parents for information. Increased awareness of this possible implication may be productive in prompting greater parental perspectives.

Two Contrasting Norms: Parental Awareness and Denial That Adolescents Encounter Pornography

The UCAP participants perceived societal norms that young people are more accepting of pornography, adolescent exposure to pornography is inevitable, and that adolescents use pornography as a sexual tool and/or stimulant. Around half of Mountain West participants suggested that most parents are aware of adolescent pornography exposure and that encountering pornography for adolescents is considered normal. The other half perceived that parents are either unaware or avoidant of adolescents encountering pornography. Similar observations noted by Mountain West participants were also observed in the Grand Lake School District: around half of Grand Lake participants perceived that most parents believe adolescents encounter pornography and are aware of how easily accessible pornography content is to the adolescent population.

Two contrasting perceived norms surfaced in this exploration. One descriptive norm contends that parents are aware that today's pornography is more visible and perhaps more accepted amongst the general population. These observations parallel aforementioned literature that asserts that adolescent access to pornography has increased significantly with the integration of the internet (Peter & Valkenburg, 2006; Ševčikova., Šerek, Machačkova, & Šmahel, 2013; Stahl & Fritz, 2002; Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2007; Vandoninck, d'Haenens, & Donoso Navarrete, 2010). In terms of implications, perpetuating a descriptive norm related to increased accessibility of pornography among adolescents may contribute as an important element in prompting parent-child communication. Jerman and Constantine (2010) note that the greater education and comfort level that a parent holds regarding sexual topics, the more confident and likely

that parents engage in sexual conversation with adolescents. Similar patterns may be reinforced within parent-child pornography communication. As parents become more knowledgeable about pornography and its reach to adolescents, they may feel more urgency to become educated about the topic and discuss it with adolescents.

A second normative pattern posits a sense of parental denial of the notion that adolescents encounter pornography. Two perspectives of "denial" emerged in this investigation. The first perspective conveyed a general denial from parents that adolescents encounter pornography. Some participants articulated that most parents are unaware that pornography is accessible and/or choose to avoid the notion that adolescents encounter pornography. Explanations describing this type of denial included parents being too busy with other activities to talk, parents not wanting to learn of adolescent pornography exposure out of fear they will have to address it with children, and/or parents simply uninvolved/unaware of their children's activities.

A second category of denial suggests most parents are aware that adolescents encounter pornography, but believe that pornography exposure does not happen to their own adolescent—or, "not my kid." Participants in the Mountain West and Grand Lake school districts shared specific examples of this perception and frequently linked this idea to more conservative and/or religious families. This descriptive norm resonates with the third-person effects hypothesis (Davison, 1983; Davison, 1996). The third-person effects hypothesis posits that individuals believe mass media messages have greater reach and impacts on others than themselves. Whereas it is not in the scope of this investigation to explore third-person effect and parental denial about adolescents encountering pornography, future research should work to conceptualize the prevalence and influences

of this descriptive norm and its relation to media theory. Further understanding of why parents select to either engage or disengage in parent-child pornography communication may be helpful in designing, implementing, and distributing educational content and resources.

Descriptive Norms Concerning Mothers and Parent-Child Pornography Communication

Several cross-case descriptive norms relating to mothers addressing pornography with adolescent children were observed. Perhaps the most germane observation was the perception that most mothers do not speak with adolescents about pornography. This perception holds interesting connections to other sexual communication research. Miller's (1998) research associated with the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health (ADD Health) indicates that a large majority of mothers have discussed sexual topics with children. Further, a number of studies propose that mothers are more involved in sexual health education with children in comparison to fathers—specifically with daughters (Fisher, 1990; Meschke, Bartholomae, & Zentall, 2002; Raffaelli et al., 1998).

Given the research that many mothers address sexual health topics with children, it was intriguing to observe a descriptive norm that presents pornography as an unaddressed issue among mothers. This perception could stem from a number of factors: first, mothers may not associate adolescent exposure to pornography with parent-child sexual communication. Whereas mothers often normatively address sexual topics with adolescents, pornography and sexual communication may be viewed as two deviating

topics not categorized in the same vein of conversation. Second, mothers may not see as large of a need to address pornography with adolescents in comparison to other sexual topics. Parental sexual communication is often considered a timeless, universal subject. In contrast, it is only within the last few decades that attention towards parent-child pornography communication has increased in conjunction with the implementation of the internet. Parent-child pornography communication may be considered a novel topic among mothers and is subsequently addressed less.

Another possible variable is that mothers are not as familiar with the topic of pornography as fathers, and thus feel less inclined to discuss it with adolescents. Nolin and Peterson (1992) suggest mothers are more prone to discuss sexual topics and/or experiences that they are more familiar with in comparison to sexual topics that they are not. This observation links to Jerman and Constantine's (2010) finding that parents' self-report comfort and sexual knowledge serve as predictors of whether parent-child sexual communication occurs. Accordingly, if mothers hold limited knowledge and experience about a particular aspect of sexual health (such as pornography), they may be less likely to discuss it.

A fourth possible explanation to the perception that most mothers do not address pornography with children could be linked to articulated descriptive norms regarding mothers' emotional responses. Participants throughout the cases often articulated negative emotional responses, such as "freak out," "anger," "horrified," "blaming," "guilt," and "explosion," as typical reactions to mothers learning a child encountered pornography. In relation to the sexual communication literature, initial emotional responses may play a role in how mothers respond to adolescents encountering

pornography. Somers and Paulson (2000) suggest that parents associate and/or experience an influential emotional reaction to discussing sexual topics with children (such as feelings of embarrassment). These scholars assert that feelings can serve as obstacles to parent-child sexual communication and may prevent parents from engaging in sexual conversations with adolescents. Similar patterns surfaced in this examination—particularly in accordance to perceptions of motherly responses such as "horrified," "freak out," and "guilt." Education and parental resources that offer steps of how to respond and/or even prompt a "retraining" of maternal emotional approaches may be helpful in prompting further parent-child pornography communication.

Another cross-case perception suggested that negative emotional responses frequently lead mothers to share more shame-based messages with children concerning pornography. Several participants conveyed the perception that most mothers blame and punish children for encountering pornography rather than engaging in open dialogue. Observations of this descriptive norm are alarming as research indicates that the average age of adolescent pornography exposure is 11 (Ropelto, 2007), and that adolescent exposure to pornography is frequently accidental and/or unwanted (Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2007).

Parental approaches to addressing adolescent pornography exposure with shame-based messaging can elicit harmful repercussions. For one, shame-based messaging can perpetuate injunctive norms that highlight the act of parents learning about adolescent pornography exposure as negative. Second, the use of shame-based messages has the potential to stifle further conversation and silence future open parent-child communication. If an adolescent is led to believe that exposure to pornography is his/her

fault and is punished for this exposure, it is reasonable to suggest that the likelihood that this adolescent will inform parents of another pornography encounter may decrease. Educating parents on how to remove shame-based messages towards adolescents when addressing pornography with children may be a helpful tactic in promoting more open and impactful dialogue.

Descriptive Norms Concerning Fathers and Parent-Child Pornography Communication

Congruent to mothers' responses, several cross-case descriptive norms surfaced concerning fathers' responses to parent-child pornography communication. Overall, descriptive norms relating to fathers' responses were perceived as mixed. A number of participants perceived that fathers accept pornography more so than mothers, and therefore view adolescent pornography exposure as a "coming of age" experience. Other participants asserted that most fathers avoid parent-child pornography out of lack of awareness and/or concern. Moreover, others suggested that fathers were more likely to discuss pornography with adolescents out of a desire to "fix" the issue.

Despite a range of perceived norms, one emergent theme suggests that fathers' responses to pornography are often less negative than mothers' responses. Although perceptions of fathers' responses vacillated from avoidance to openly addressing pornography with adolescents, participants perceived fathers as enacting a more objective, less emotional approach than mothers. Explanations of decreased negativity among fathers to adolescent pornography exposure varied. For example, some participants (both males and females) perceived males as being more accepting of

pornography and, subsequently, not as surprised if male sons encounter pornography, in comparison to mothers. This perception of greater acceptance of pornography among males was attributed to less of a negative fatherly response to adolescents encountering pornography. Second, fathers were perceived as taking less offense at pornography's content than mothers. Participants reasoned that whereas pornography frequently utilizes the exploitation of women, most men do not experience as strong of a negative emotional response as women.

Scholarship within the sexual communication literature relates to descriptive norms that portray fathers as using less negative approaches. Swain, Ackerman, and Ackerman (2006), for instance, assert that fathers are often less negative than mothers when addressing the consequences of sexual involvement with children. Yet, as observed in this investigation, less negativity does not necessarily equate to positive responses from fathers. Whereas less emotionally driven approaches may benefit discussion of topics that are sensitive in nature, such approaches may lean too far to parenting styles where children act without understanding and/or consequences. Those looking to share messages with parents about parent-child pornography communication should recognize a potential strength in that some fathers will approach parent-child pornography communication from a more tranquil standpoint. However, this realization should also be paired with education about potential impacts of pornography consumption on adolescents, as some fathers may not see value in discussing pornography with children.

Another observed cross-case pattern related to biological sex. A number of participants suggested that if fathers do speak with children about pornography, fathers will more likely address pornography with sons rather than daughters. This observation

relates to sexual communication research in that fathers are more likely to converse with their sons than daughters, whereas mothers are more likely to talk about sexual topics with their daughters (DiIorio, Pluhar, & Belcher, 2003; Swain et al., 2006). Research explorations also contend that both male and female adolescents report being more likely to engage in sexual-based topics with mothers in comparison to fathers. Interestingly, however, these scholars note that sons more than daughters express greater comfort in talking with fathers about sexual topics (DiIorio, Kelley, & Hockenberry-Eaton, 1999). Thus, the perception of fathers speaking with adolescent males and mothers speaking with adolescent females was not a surprising descriptive norm as both parental and child comfort levels may increase when speaking with members of the same biological sex. Those sharing messages about parent-child pornography communication should take biological sex into consideration in efforts to initiate greater levels of comfort among parents and adolescents.

Parental Fears About Engagement in Parent-Child Pornography Communication

In addition to cross-case descriptive norms related to mothers and fathers, patterns emerged regarding how most parents perceive the act of talking with children about pornography. Negative emotional descriptors such as “fear,” “embarrassment,” “hesitant,” “dread”, “uncomfortable,” “anxious,” “trepidation,” “horrible,” and “guilt” were articulated across cases. The emotional response of “fear” was the most prevalent response in this examination.

As mentioned in the results section, participants’ descriptions of “fear” varied and were often connected to a number of contextual variables. Four explanatory patterns to

contextual variables emerged throughout the present investigation. The first pattern linked the emotion of "fear" to what parents may learn if they discuss pornography with children. A number of participants expressed the perception that parents are afraid of discovering that children have already viewed pornography with the instigation of parent-child pornography communication. This explanation of "fear" resonates with other observed descriptive norms, such as parental avoidance and denial that adolescents encounter pornography.

Overlaying parenting styles research to parental fears of discovering adolescents have already encountered pornography provides intriguing implications. For example, parental avoidance is often associated with the permissive parenting type, or parental approaches that encompass more leniency to avoid confrontation with children. Furthermore, the use of the permissive parenting style can interfere with open parent-child pornography communication. Byrne and Lee (2011) record that permissive parents communicated difficultly in addressing the dangers of the internet with their children; clear expectations and understanding of media involvement consequences were not outlined or conceptualized by adolescents. Recognition that parental fears may reinforce parenting styles and approaches might be a key insight for practitioners and interventions working to promote parent-child pornography communication. Perhaps interventions will experience greater success if they work to reshape less effective parental approaches as a means to combat emotional fears rather than focusing solely on increasing parental pornography education.

A second pattern highlights parental fears to initiate and effectively address pornography discussions with children. Participants perceived that most parents do not

know how to commence open parent-child pornography conversations and, thus, fear doing so. This perception of parental fear resonates with scholarly literature related to parent-child communication about technology and sexuality. Cho and Cheon (2005), for example, suggest that parents hold limited knowledge regarding their child's internet experience and communicate that parental internet supervision is difficult due to the ease of accessibility for many adolescents. Moreover, Wang, Bianchi, and Raley (2005) observe that parents often feel adolescents are more competent with technology then they are, particularly as technology continues to change and evolve. Additionally, Jerman and Constantine's (2010) predictors of sexual communication hold interesting ties to parental fears of effectively initiating and engaging in parent-child pornography conversations. These authors identify the variables of *self-reported comfort* (e.g., how comfortable parents feel about addressing sexual topics with children), *sexual knowledge*, and *sexual communication openness* as strong predictors whether parents select to address sexuality with children.

Perhaps utilizing research related to technology combined with Jerman and Constantine's three predictors of sexual communication as a core for intervention outcomes will be productive in promoting greater parent-child pornography communication. To illustrate, how might intervention outcomes shift if they strategically work to increase parental knowledge about adolescent technology use and accessibility of pornography in efforts to raise parental pornography knowledge and communication openness? Resources provided to parents may transition to include more broad-based communication strategies that educate and prompt greater levels of parental technology and sexual communication openness. Slight alterations may be made as efforts to build

parental self-efficacy about technology and pornography take precedence in how related resources are organized and shared. Such resources may combat parental fears of inadequacy and lack of knowledge about pornography—particularly as these fears are perceived by some as a societal norm.

A third pattern links parental fears of increasing adolescent curiosity about pornography to the act of parent-child pornography communication. Several participants used the phrase "opening up a can of worms" to describe the perception that parental pornography discussion heightens adolescent curiosity about pornography and consequently drives adolescents to seek pornography out on their own accord. Minimal research has explored parent-child pornography communication and increasing adolescent curiosity about pornography. Peter and Valkenburg (2012) examined this topic in more detail in their investigation, "Do Questions about Watching Internet Pornography Make People Watch Internet Pornography? A Comparison Between Adolescents and Adults." Results for the investigation were somewhat mixed, with Peter and Valkenburg encouraging future research that incorporates "programmatic research on a variety of socially undesirable behavior" and cautions scholars in applying findings to varying social issues. However, Peter and Valkenburg suggest that the majority of their findings posit "that questions about the general and specific use of SEIM [sexually explicit internet material] do not stimulate that very behavior, at least not among adolescents" (p. 408). Greater research is needed in this area as perceptions of societal norms express parental fears of adolescent curiosity with parent-child pornography communication.

In addition to Peter and Valkenburg's examination, other research findings

illuminate further implications to parental fears of parent-child pornography communication driving adolescent curiosity. As addressed earlier, Cooper, Delmonico, and Berg (2000) suggest that the number of adolescents encountering pornography in their teenage years is on the rise. Ropelato (2007) argues that the average age of adolescent pornography exposure is age 11. Additionally, adolescent pornography exposure is often unsolicited due to the widespread nature of pornographic content on the internet (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007).

Based on the aforementioned data, to say that adolescents will never encounter pornography in their preadult years may be premature. Exposure rates research should be taken into consideration when advocating parent-child pornography education with parents. Whereas parents may fear the idea that parent-child pornography communication instills increased degrees of curiosity among adolescents, greater awareness needs to be ascertained about the consequences of parents not addressing and/or avoiding pornography with adolescents. To illustrate, say the parents of an 11-year-old female have yet to discuss pornography with their daughter out of a fear that she will become curious about pornography and explore the subject further. However, while doing her homework on the internet, a YouTube ad pops up that includes pornographic content. This adolescent has been raised in a more permissive parenting style where difficult conversations are often avoided and does not feel comfortable addressing the subject with her parents. If parental communication is not viewed as a viable option, where might this adolescent turn for resources to help her conceptualize what she recently viewed? Will she choose to not speak to someone about the ad? Will she search for more information about pornography on the internet? Will she ask one of her peers

about pornography?

The above hypothetical situation offers an array of possible outcomes. However, two prevailing questions emerge: if parents do not provide adolescents with information about pornography, who will? And will this information include the accuracy and support needed for adolescents? Consequently, whereas the fear of increasing adolescent curiosity through discussion is present, a lack of parental communication may leave adolescents with minimal resources and inaccurate information. Pornography interventions should work to empower parents with awareness concerning various options of educating children about pornography. Although diverse approaches may encompass communication differently, depending upon parent-child dynamics, knowledge concerning potential consequences of engaging (or choosing not to engage) in parent-child pornography communication is valuable.

The final pattern explores parental fears of damaging adolescent innocence through the act of parent-child pornography communication. Several participants perceived a descriptive norm that if parents address pornography with adolescents, adolescents may be "forced to grow up too fast" or become aware of content they should not have to encounter at a young age. Participants conveyed that these fears frequently lead parents to not address pornography with adolescents because parents wish to protect their children from harmful material. Other participants shared contrasting opinions to parental fears and childhood innocence. For instance, Kate from Mountain West suggested that if parents do not address pornography with children, they are either "blind" or "remiss" to the content children come in contact with, particularly within school settings.

Creating balance between educating adolescents about pornography and maintaining adolescent innocence may be a difficult and daunting task. However, resources that work to achieve this balance by presenting pornography education through age-sensitive messaging and refrain from using pornographic imagery to educate exist. To illustrate, the children's picture book *Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids* conveys the story of a mother and father who teach their child about pornography. This book acts as a conversation starter to help parents discuss what pornography is, why pornography can be harmful, and how children can reject it. Moreover, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also recently released a comparable video to the content shared in *Good Pictures Bad Pictures*. The video, entitled "What Should I Do When I See Pornography," illustrates adolescents educating other adolescents about pornography. The video commences by highlighting that just as there are physical dangers presented to human bodies, other types of dangers exist on the internet. Adolescents are seen explaining how pornography exposure impacts the adolescent brain and can be harmful to mental development. The video includes a plan of action for adolescents when they encounter pornography, integrating steps such as (1) identifying pornography and naming it (2) turning away from pornography, and (3) talking to a parent or trusted adult about the content witnessed. The video also highlights that just because pornography may make adolescents interested or curious, this emotional response does not mean adolescents are "bad people" or have done something wrong. The video concludes by promoting more open communication between parents and adolescents through its illustrations of parents asking questions to adolescents, not using shame-based messaging with children, and encouraging adolescents to continue to

discuss pornography openly with parents.

The book *Good Pictures Bad Pictures* and the video "What Should I Do If I See Pornography" are only two example resources that work to bridge the gap between sharing pornography education messages through an age-sensitive means. Integration of similar approaches could be valuable in recognition that some parents feel uneasy about discussing pornography with adolescents out of fear of damaging childhood innocence. In particular, creating resources that are developmentally age appropriate and do not use pornographic triggers to educate may be helpful approaches in appeasing parental fears. Forthcoming research should examine this descriptive norm in efforts to understand if adolescents perceive a loss of innocence when parents discuss pornography with them. Incorporating attention to parenting styles and how pornography is addressed with adolescents in relation to maintaining childhood innocence may be useful.

Parental Reactivity Versus Proactivity: Preparing Adolescents to Encounter Pornography

One final cross-case norm regards the perception of parents reacting to adolescent pornography exposure as opposed to pursuing preventative/preparative measures. For instance, Alex's statement (from Grand Lake) serves as an example of reactionary statements communicated across cases: "I think most parents think they would be willing to talk about it [pornography], but they honestly… I think may pray every day that they don't have to talk about it." Alex's notion that parents may be willing to discuss pornography with adolescents but "pray every day that they don't have to" embodies the idea that pornography is addressed with adolescents only after adolescent exposure

occurs. This perception echoes the conclusion of O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahldburg, and Watkin (2001), in that conversations about sex are often initiated through observations of children's social (e.g., interest in the opposite sex) and physical changes (e.g., puberty) during early adolescence. Moreover, parents frequently focus sexual conversation on biological observations rather than romantic and/or interpersonal details (Whitaker & Miller, 2000).

Societal perceptions that sexual health communication (including discussions about pornography) originates from parental observations may be harmful. Somers and Paulson (2000) contend that many parents begin to discuss sexual topics with their children only after an observation, and that this reactive approach attributes less of an impact to positive adolescent sexual socialization. Awareness of the similarities observed through descriptive norms in this examination and sexual communication research may be helpful for practitioners and organizations promoting parent-child pornography communication.

One approach to counteract obstacles of reactivity versus proactivity is to alter the language with which parent-child pornography communication is presented to parents. For instance, the Utah Coalition Against Pornography recently began distributing brief messages about *preparing* adolescents to encounter pornography. Recognizing that the likelihood that adolescents will encounter pornography is increasing, the idea of preparing adolescents to respond to pornography prompts greater focus towards discussions prior to pornography encounters. Such approaches may be helpful in advocating parental assertiveness rather than reactivity. Moreover, if adolescents are prepared and provided with guidelines on how they should respond if they encounter

pornography, they may be more open to engage in parental discussions—particularly if one of these guidelines includes informing a trusted adult of exposure. Education in this area may be helpful in counteracting descriptive norms that perceive parents as reactors rather than assertive educators and resources.

Cross-Case Injunctive Norms About Parent-Child Pornography Communication

Generational Influences From Previous Parental Pornography Communication and Now

Messages concerning what participants "ought to do" regarding parent-child pornography communication varied more from case to case in comparison to expressed descriptive norms. Variation in injunctive norms may be due to differing levels of awareness and education about parent-child pornography education among each case. However, a few patterns did emerge across the examination. The first pattern relates to general observations about how previous generations discussed pornography and sexuality. Although a few participants conveyed open family communication patterns, the majority of participants articulated characteristics associated with closed family patterns, specifically in regards to parental avoidance where "taboo" topics (such as pornography) were not openly discussed by parents. In response to the question, "What would your own parents tell you ought to do if he/she learned your own child encountered pornography?" several participants communicated that their own parents would not share any messages and/or avoid the subject. As illustrated in the results section, these responses sometimes led to participants sharing childhood narratives--

where the topic of pornography was often "swept under the rug" or children were told "don't look at pornography" but then left to wonder why this instruction was given.

Injunctive norms shared about previous generations in this examination reflected more closed, authoritarian and/or permissive parenting styles (where little discipline is provided or when children are disciplined, they are not encouraged to understand parental reasoning for discipline). Few participants relayed messages that exemplified qualities of the authoritative parenting style, or parenting approaches that strike a balance between setting firm guidelines with allowance for discussion to assist children to understand these guidelines. Additionally, observed generational injunctive norms related to patterns within shared descriptive norms: many participants perceived societal norms where pornography and other sexual topics are subjects that most parents do not address and associate as "taboo." Links between closed communication descriptive and injunctive norms reveal that parents may be continuing on with previous generational trends and styles of family communication patterns. This observation is not surprising, particularly in relation to sexual communication literature that suggests that previous generations often influence present parental approaches (Fisher, 1990; Kniveton & Day, 1999; Lehr, Demi, DiIorio, & Facteau, 2005).

Despite potentially reinforcing descriptive and injunctive norms, not all participants followed suit in allowing these norms to influence individual behavior. Tensions were observed between generational injunctive norms and the subsequent behavioral practices of participants. I noted several instances where participants expressed previous closed family dynamic injunctive norms, yet a number of participants articulated that, due to their upbringing, they made conscious efforts to derail from

previous injunctive norms and promote open communication within their own homes. This observation was especially prevalent among UCAP participants. Several participants commented that they are presently viewed as "the resource" or instigator of parent-child pornography communication within their family as other family members observe divergent behavioral acts from previous childhood family dynamics. Some participants even conveyed that they had become the source of advice for other family members concerning talking with children and parent-child pornography communication.

Bute and Jensen (2010) also observed conflict between injunctive norms and behavior. These scholars posit, "When it comes to guiding behaviors, messages about peer expectations sometimes seemed to have more import for participants than did authoritative expectations […]" (p. 690). Observations from this examination echo similar findings. Injunctive messages that shared authoritative, commanding messages without opportunity for further communication appeared to hold less of an impact on participant behavior. In fact, several participants directly rebelled from these types of messages by selecting to integrate an opposite approach, open communication between parents and children within their family environment.

Bute and Jensen also comment that peer injunctive messages may be more impactful as participants are able to identify with peers more than with messages posed by authoritative figures. This examination extends their discussion to pose the characteristic of open communication between parties, or an opportunity to discuss a topic in greater detail as an influencing factor concerning the impact of injunctive norms. Although the focus of this examination was to explore perceived descriptive and injunctive norms, numerous participants throughout all cases conveyed the attributes of

parents being open, more question-oriented, and willing to listen as key elements of successful parent-child relationships. Such characteristics were also identified as essential to discussing sensitive topics with adolescents, including parent-child pornography communication. Furthermore, the notion of using open, authoritative parenting messages resonates with a number of previous examinations and gels with much of the literature shared in Chapter 2. Researchers and parent-child pornography communication interventions should continue to promote the characteristics of openness, particularly in recognition that generational injunctive norms may convey opposite messages.

Judgement From Other Parents and Building a Community of Resources

A second injunctive norm pattern conveys the perception that other parents judge the parents of adolescents who have encountered pornography. Although this norm was shared more heavily by the participants associated with UCAP, aspects of parents judging other parents emerged in all cases. For example, a few Mountain West participants commented on characteristics of parental denial of adolescent pornography exposure, asserting that some parents redirect blame for adolescent pornography accessibility to influences outside the home in efforts to prevent judgement from others. Additionally, a few Grand Lake participants associated "fear" and "guilt" as emotional responses to pornography, suggesting that parents may fear potential judgments from others upon learning that their child is exposed to pornography.

The perception that parents receive judgement from other parents holds several negative implications. For one, as articulated by Rebecca (UCAP participant), parents

may feel burdened if they perceive that others are negatively discussing their own parent-child relationships and circumstances. Such burdens are amplified when combined with articulated emotional descriptive norm responses to pornography (e.g., "fear," "anger,") and descriptive norms related to emotions associated with parent-child pornography communication (e.g., "fear," "embarrassment," "hesitant," and "dread"). For some, perceiving judgements from other parents may be the "tip of the iceberg" in dissuading parents from avoiding pornography communication, perhaps not only with other parents but even one's own adolescent.

Another insight postulates that fear of judgement from others may be a key component of perpetuating descriptive and injunctive norms that depict closed family communication patterns as normative. Participants in this examination conveyed descriptive norms that characterize pornography as a closed, "taboo" topic (particularly from previous generations). Consequently, part of this sense of taboo may stem from feelings of potential judgements from others. Future research should work to investigate possible feelings of judgement and its relationship to parent-child pornography communication and family dynamics. This research may prove insightful in interventional acts to create resources that assist parents in responding and overcoming feelings of judgement from others.

One approach to combatting parental judgment is encouraging parents to build communities of parent-child pornography communication resources. Although many UCAP participants conveyed societal perceptions of parental judgements, the majority of UCAP participants communicated positive implications of talking openly about adolescent pornography exposure with trusted networks of individuals and organizations.

Interestingly, injunctive messages shared between trusted individuals (or those close to participants) and injunctive messages shared by antipornography organizations often paralleled in messaging content. For many UCAP participants these individuals were viewed as one in the same. Perhaps in conjunction with access to a variety of supporters and resources, several UCAP participants conveyed feelings of being able to address pornography openly within family, religious, and community settings. Such openness often trumped other descriptive and injunctive norms that shaped pornography as a taboo and closed communication topic. Furthermore, many UCAP participants promptly offered resources and suggestions for how to engage in parent-child pornography communication as supportive messages shared by interventions echoed other sources of participant-perceived injunctive norms.

Building a trusted community of resources for parents to openly engage, ask questions, and feel a part of may be an important factor in promoting parent-child pornography messages. In fact, a few participants mentioned the idea of creating a social media platform that specifically constitutes a space for parents to openly discuss parent-child pornography communication, post relevant resources, and vent about difficulties and obstacles. The creation of a platform that facilitates parental interactions may, in turn, serve as an effective tool in promoting open parent-child pornography communication dialogue, and thus provide a space for parents to not only engage in this form of conversation, but also practice its implementation.

Study Limitations and Future Research

Study Limitations

Several limitations surfaced in the current examination. For one, this investigation utilized a qualitative, case-study design and analysis. Qualitative approaches are often productive in aggregating more detailed, in-depth data and provide enhanced opportunities for follow-up questioning. A qualitative case analysis approach was appropriate for this examination as it was my aim to employ in-depth questioning methods among groups or cases of parents that held differing levels of awareness about parent-child pornography communication. However, generalizability to broader populations within qualitative case analysis is limited. Whereas the present examination design was useful in comparing findings between cases and posing possible implications, future research should work to approach this topic with other research approaches. Specifically, quantitative designs that explore attitudes and opinions related to this investigation among a larger, nationally representative population may be helpful in generalizing findings from this analysis to a broader spectrum.

A second limitation relates to a lack of diversity in beliefs about pornography from involved parents. I found recruitment of parents for this investigation to be exceptionally arduous. Similar to observations discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the word "pornography" is often associated with an array of conceptualizations and feelings. Accordingly, I experienced a great degree of hesitancy and/or negative responses during the recruitment process from individuals and organizations who preferred to distance themselves from this investigation.

Difficulties in recruitment had an impact on obtaining a variety of perspectives

from parents about pornography and adolescents encountering pornography. Although I encountered diverging viewpoints regarding perceptions of societal norms and pornography, the majority of participants contended that exposure to pornography is harmful for adolescents. Some research counteracts this belief among parents. For instance, Carroll et al. (2008) suggests that pornography is more acceptable among emergent adults. Although this examination integrated minute levels of acceptance among participants (e.g., the perception that pornography consumption is acceptable among adults and pornography can enhance sexual relationships), future research should work to integrate a more diverse sample of parental beliefs and attitudes towards pornography. Incorporating more diversity in parental perspectives may reveal further understanding of how to present parent-child pornography communication messages to broader audiences.

Another limitation involves diversity of ethnic and economic background within the given study sample. For the most part, participants in this examination were Caucasian and generally categorized their economic status as "middle class" or above. This factor was not viewed as vital in this particular examination, as Jerman and Constantine (2010) posit sexual predictors to be more influential to parental sexual communication than participant demographics. However, such factors should not be overlooked. Future research should work to incorporate and compare varying demographic factors as analysis of parent-child pornography communication may differ from parent-child sexual communication.

Future Research

The purpose of this exploration was to create a basis for future research concerning parent-child pornography communication through exploration of related descriptive and injunctive norms. As a minimal number of studies addressing parent-child pornography communication exists, greater research is needed. Insight from this investigation highlights a number of directions for future examinations. To begin, future research should more closely explore possible connections between parental beliefs about pornography, parental denial, and the third-person effects hypothesis (Davison, 1983; Davison, 1996). A number of participants conveyed descriptive norms that suggest that whereas most parents acknowledge that pornography exposure among adolescents is a prevailing issue, some parents express denial that their own adolescent children may encounter pornography. This finding resonates with third-person effects hypothesis that explores phenomena related to underestimating personal impacts to mass media messages. Overlaying the third-person effects hypothesis on future investigations may be helpful in understanding degrees of parental denial, possible impacts, as well as how related beliefs may be counteracted.

Another area of research should strive to investigate emotional constructs related to pornography. Perceptions of emotional constructs conveyed by participants in this examination were exceptionally diverse, complex, contextually based, and often negative. Understanding the nature of these complexities may prove useful in constructing and distributing resources to parents about parent-child pornography communication. As posited in this investigation, parent and adolescent communication related to parent-child pornography communication may be as much of an emotionally laden experience as it is

a knowledge-based conversation. Increased awareness of emotional influences and their roles in pornography communication could prove valuable in shaping resources geared towards more diverse emotional responses from parents.

Tensions between injunctive norms and behavior also hold implications for future research and interventions. As noted in this study, positions associated with pornography ranged from a personal, familial discussion to a broader, societal dialogue. These perspectives may come into play in prompting parent-child communication about pornography. Future research should be sensitive to these observations in efforts to more explicitly comprehend the weight injunctive norms hold in shaping parental feelings towards sensitive conversations with children.

Conclusion

Norms are a central component of everyday life and frequently influence behavior. Investigating perceptions of norms that surround a certain topic can be productive in conceptualizing impacting elements of a phenomenon. This exploratory investigation worked to highlight some of the complexities that exist in regards to parents addressing pornography with children and perceptions of normative influences that may be prevalent. My aim for this study was to begin to gage parental attitudes concerning pornography, pornography's impact on society, and the courses of action (or lack thereof) that parents undertake and believe others take when children are exposed to pornography. In doing so, several descriptive and injunctive norms that surround ideas associated with parent-child communication about pornography were explored. Patterns among these

norms indicate ideas that address the prevalence of adolescent pornography exposure and the tensions and obstacles parents face in engaging in such conversations.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

Introduction and Purpose:

"As a researcher, I am interested in your perception of what society believes about pornography. We will be discussing societal perceptions of pornography as well as how you feel most parents respond when children are exposed to pornography.
Please know that your answers will be kept confidential and stored in a password protected database and that this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes. I will also be using pseudonyms so your identity will be kept confidential. Additionally, please know that if any point you do not wish to answer a question, please feel free to say "skip" and we can move to the next question. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Awesome! I realize that for some, pornography can be a difficult topic to discuss. Thanks again for your willingness to share! So, to get started, let's just jump right in…"

Interview Questions:

1. How do most people define the word "pornography"?
2. What emotion do most people connect to the word "pornography"?
3. What do most people believe about adolescents being exposed to pornography?
4. Let's say that a child was exposed to some sort of sexually explicit material. How would most mothers react if they found out about this exposure? How would most fathers react if they found out about this exposure?
5. Do you think most mothers talk with their children about pornography? If so, at what age doe this happen for children? How often? What do they say?

6. Do you think most fathers talk with their children about pornography? If so, at what age doe this happen for children? How often? What do they say?
7. What emotion would you pair with thinking about having a conversation with your child about pornography?
8. What do those close to you think you ought to do if your child is exposed to pornography?
9. Have other parents shared any messages with you regarding talking to children about pornography?
10. Have your own parents shared any messages with you regarding talking to children about pornography?
11. What do most people believe would be the outcome regarding speaking with children about pornography?
12. Are there any external groups or organizations that influence how people think about pornography? If so, what are they? What do they say?
13. Are you familiar with any religious organizations that currently shares messages about parents communicating with children about pornography? If so, which ones? What do they say? Are their messages influential for parents?
14. Are you familiar with any other organization outside of your personal and religious associations that are currently sharing messages about adolescents and pornography, as well as parents addressing pornography with children? If so, which ones? What are they saying? Are they influential?
15. Are there any obstacles that most parents face when talking with children about pornography?

16. Do you have any suggestions for how to help parents discuss pornography with their children?

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE DATA DISPLAY MODEL OUTLINE

Interviewee	**General descriptive norms (what most people do or think others do)**	Descriptive norms concerning definition of pornography	Descriptive norms regarding porn and adolescents	Descriptive norms regarding parent-child pornography communication	**General Injunctive Norms (what those close to them think they "ought" to do)**
Alice	*Emotion: negative--disgust	*Watching sex on a movie or TV, or seeing in it in a magazine. Basically sex	*Most people don't want adolescents to be exposed to porn *Most people are in denial that adolescents are exposed--stemming from religious beliefs	*Most moms would react in shock--lead to scream/yelling--take away source of porn and tell child "no" without further discussion *Most moms do not talk with children about pornography	*Close to interviewee: talk to child, tell them what it is and why to not look at it *Own parents: very open parents and would encourage parent-child pornography communication *Own children: daughter exposed to porn at school by peers and tells mom--daughter thinks it's gross

Interviewee	**General descriptive norms (what most people do or think others do)**	Descriptive norms concerning definition of pornography	Descriptive norms regarding porn and adolescents	Descriptive norms regarding parent-child pornography communication	**General Injunctive Norms (what those close to them think they "ought" to do)**
	*Emotion with having a conversation about porn: Scared, "almost like talking about death"-parents scared because they want children to remain innocent/child			*Most fathers would also be shocked, but would be more disappointed--not as dramatic as moms *Most father talk with sons but not to daughters *Conversations depend on family--most religious families avoid the conversation *If parents do discuss porn, it's a one-time conversation	*Not religious and not familiar with any religion sharing messages about pornography *Mixture of responses by other parents *School would respond but just send child home to parent--not give specific advice *Not familiar with any external organizations sharing messages with children *Outcome: most people think it would make a child more curious

APPENDIX C

OVERVIEW OF FREQUENCY DATA ANALYSIS

Top Descriptive Norm Mentions Regarding Definition of Pornography

Participant Responses	**UCAP**	**Mountain West**	**Grand Lake**	**All Cases Combined**
"Nudity" or analogous phrasing	21%	40%	78%	42%
"Sexual exploitation" or analogous phrasing	0%	50%	11%	18%
"Sexually explicit" or analogous phrasing	42%	10%	11%	24%
"Sex" and/or "sexual acts"	21%	30%	22%	24%
Involves sexual arousal	21%	10%	11%	15%
"Taboo" and/or generates response from audience	14%	10%	11%	12%
Included medium of use/access	42%	50%	44%	45%

Top Descriptive Norm Mentions Regarding Pornography and Adolescents

Participant Responses	**UCAP**	**Mountain West**	**Grand Lake**	**All Cases Combined**
Adolescents exposure to pornography is normative	86%	50%	78%	72%
Adolescents do not encounter pornography	0%	50%	22%	21%
Adolescents are accepting of pornography	28%	0%	22%	18%
Parental avoidance/denial--"not my child"	21%	50%	44%	36%
Parents are not concerned about exposure	14%	40%	55%	27%

Top Descriptive Norm Mentions Regarding Mother Responses to Adolescent Exposure to Pornography

Participant Responses	**UCAP**	**Mountain West**	**Grand Lake**	**All Cases Combined**
Mothers address pornography with children	14%	0%	89%	30%
Mothers do not address pornography with children	86%	100%	11%	70%
Mothers respond positively to PCPC	8%	20%	11%	29%
Mothers respond negatively when learning child was exposed to pornography	92%	80%	89%	71%

Top Descriptive Norm Mentions Regarding Father Responses to Adolescent Exposure to Pornography

Participant Responses	UCAP	Mountain West	Grand Lake	All Cases Combined
Fathers address pornography with children	14%	20%	22%	18%
Fathers do not address pornography with children	86%	80%	78%	82%
Fathers respond positively when learning child was exposed to pornography	29%	40%	33%	33%
Fathers respond negatively when learning child was exposed to pornography	71%	60%	67%	67%

Top Descriptive Norm Mentions Regarding Parental Emotional Responses to Parent-child Pornography Communication

Participant Responses	UCAP	Mountain West	Grand Lake	All Cases Combined
Fear/scared	78%	70%	88%	79%
Anxiety/angst	64%	60%	66%	64%
Guilt	21%	10%	11%	15%
Uncomfortable	36%	40%	44%	39%
Embarrassed	14%	20%	0%	12%
Wanting to help	0%	0%	11%	3%

Top Injunctive Norm Mentions

Participant Responses	**UCAP**	**Mountain West**	**Grand Lake**	**All Cases Combined**
Those close to interviewee encourages PCPC	93%	50%	56%	70%
Religion encourages PCPC	71%	60%	56%	64%
Religion does not encourage or remains neutral to PCPC	29%	40%	44%	36%
Other parents encourage PCPC	64%	30%	89%	60%
Other parents do not encourage or remain neutral to PCPC	36%	70%	11%	40%
Local school district encourages PCPC	58%	50%	22%	45%
Local school district does not encourage or remains neutral to PCPC	41%	50%	78%	55%

*PCPC=Parent-child Pornography Communication

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